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THE CRUISE OF THE ALABAMA

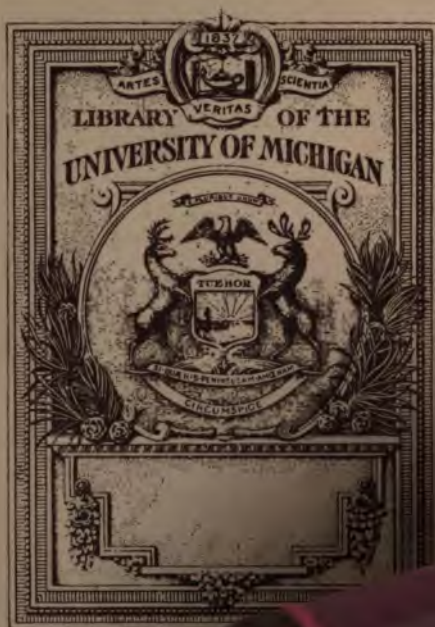
BY
ONE OF THE CREW



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THE
CRUISE OF THE ALABAMA

BY ONE OF THE CREW

Haywood, P. D.



*WITH NOTES FROM HISTORICAL
AUTHORITIES*



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
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1886



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PUBLISHERS' ADVERTISEMENT.

THE narrative which follows was brought to the publishers by the author, P. D. Haywood, who contributed also a brief statement to the *Century Magazine*. No attempt has been made to translate the sailor's language into that of a literary work, but the opportunity has been taken to annotate it with extracts chiefly from works by those who can be relied upon as spokesmen for the men who set the *Alabama* afloat and conducted her cruise. It has not been deemed necessary to make this book a full report of the *Alabama's* movements, but the maps which accompany it will furnish the reader with a clue to the course of the ship.

317281

THE CRUISE OF THE ALABAMA.

I.

I HAVE never liked Liverpool. Its greasy, grimy, pea-soupy atmosphere, its dirt, and its varied, all-pervading smells, none of which are perfumes, are alike odious to me ; but as a seaman I can give better reasons for the faith that is in me than these.

The greater part of the floating coffins that leave port manned, insured, and cargoed, to go down in mid-ocean, are owned here, and Liverpool ship-owners have a deserved reputation for sheer greed and grasping avarice. They were the first to introduce the present system of under-paying, under-feeding, and over-working the men who sail their ships ; nor do I see that they condone their offenses against right and humanity by their liberality in building sailor chapels and filling the forecastles of outward-bound ships

with tracts and religious books. These may improve Jack's spiritual condition, but do not make his poor grub more palatable or nourishing. In short, we have all heard of the philanthropist who stole the goose and gave the giblets to the poor.

When I landed here in July, 1862, from a China voyage, I found the city in a fever of excitement and speculation. Cotton was rising a penny a pound daily, and everybody was making haste to get rich. Men in gray suits and broad-brimmed hats were much fêted and hand-shaken; these were Confederates, and they generally acted like quiet, proper gentlemen, while their British admirers made asses of themselves. Northerners met very scant civility, and indeed no one seemed to doubt that the great republic of the West was hopelessly gone under in wreck and ruin. Under the coming order of things Liverpool was to be the entrepôt of Southern commerce; cotton ruled the world, and we would rule cotton; and indeed I thought this way myself.

But I could not understand the exceeding bitterness to the North evinced by Englishmen here. I had known plenty of Yankees

in China, and thought them exceeding good fellows generally. Of course they were very apt to give one the hot end of the poker in a trade, but I knew Englishmen too well to believe that overreaching was peculiar to Americans.

Although a Southerner by birth, I had only been two years in South Carolina; but my sympathies were strongly with the Confederates, and I am happy to say that I had none of the bitter murderous feeling, defiant of reason and humanity, that seemed to animate so many of them. Of course the worst in language and sentiment were the bomb-proof heroes that demolished Yankee armies in pot-houses and at dinner-tables.

In company with three friends I was in Commey's bar-room in Dale Street, listening to one of these men relate with many yar's and thar's how he had stampeded a regiment of Yankees at Chickachackiny, or some such place, when entered to us a bronzed, hardy-looking fellow, built like a mainmast, and dressed in sailor blue and a gold-laced cap, who announced himself an American and the boaster a liar, and at once proceeded to fire the astonished Cracker clean through the

door into the street, and then declared in a very truculent and determined manner his resolution to thrash the whole party. Result, we all took to our heels, and, *relicta bene parmula*, left our hats behind us. I suppose the victor carried away the remains of the Cracker, for I never saw either of them again.

In my own family, my mother was a violent partisan of the South, and declared that any attempt to make white women marry "niggers" was an outrage, and justified all and any means of defense; while my father, an old naval officer, denounced the Southerners as rebels and mutineers, and hoped they would all be brought to the "gratings," — so honors were easy.

The only Northerner that I knew was a man named Pennypacker, from Pennsylvania. He was as thin as a sprit-sail yard and must have weighed about ninety pounds, but was a perfect game-cock, and held up his end anywhere and everywhere. He did n't pick his words, either, and denounced Liverpool merchants as cowardly pirates and wreckers, who were willing to serve the devil for wages; and indeed I quite agreed with him. I asked one

man that I knew well, who got a severe tongue-lashing from the Yankee, why he took it so quietly, and his answer was "that he could n't lay hand on what he could n't see;" and in truth poor Pennypacker was like the definition of a line, — "length without breadth." Of course there were many here that were in hearty sympathy with the Federal government, but they were not demonstrative, and generally kept their opinions to themselves, or proclaimed them in congenial company.

My object in coming to Liverpool was to meet a friend named Brennan, who had been fellow middy with me on the *Britannia* before *Sevastopol*. We both left the service at the same time and for the same cause, and when I think of the pranks we played I admit that our first lieutenant was justified in saying "that our high spirits might be appreciated in social circles ashore, but were an infernal nuisance on board one of her Majesty's ships."

I found Brennan mounted on a high stool in an office, and was surprised at the change that trading and money-making had brought about in his appearance; his round, chubby

face had grown thin and long, and his eyes had the usual eager look of his fellow commercials. He was glad to see me, and asked me to dine with him.

This is an Englishman's pledge of amity and good feeling the world over, and he is generally a jolly entertainer, despite the inevitable blowing about the wine. American dinner parties are not enjoyable to me; the natives talk too much and too well, and then there is the horror of being asked to make a "few remarks," to the unfortunate Briton who has not acquired the art of thinking on his legs.

Dinner parties fifty years since must have been terrible. My father remembered when it was the custom to drink toasts with a sentiment to follow. Dick Swiveller's favorite, "May the wing of friendship never moult a feather," is a specimen of this last. I have heard of a poor Scotchman who was called on, and arose gasping, and finally burst out with "the reflection of the mune in the cawm bosom of the lek."

I met my friend at a hotel in Dale Street, and found four gentlemen with him. Dinner was ordered up, and everything was very

good. When the decanters were placed on the table, all commenced to talk at once ; the war in the States was the principal topic, and they were all fierce Southern partisans, and spoke with the utmost contempt of the Yankee army and navy, one young gentleman offering six to two in ponies that by Christmas the blockade would be raised and New York under the fire of another and more formidable Confederate Merrimac. How foolish and inconsequent their talk seems, viewed in the light of subsequent events !

“ Well, Phil, what are your future plans ? ”

I said, truly, that I had made none, “ but would no doubt go to sea again.”

“ All right, old boy ; I can let you into a good thing, but let ’s be cautious.”

Here, to my astonishment, they all arose from the table, and began to draw to the window curtains, and one made a “ Flemish lock ” to the door by tilting a chair back under the knob, while Brennan held up a warning finger suggesting caution. I had heard tales of crimping and shanghaeing in this town, and I knew that sailors were scarce, so I seized a bottle by the neck, and determined to knock their confounded heads off

if they tried any games on me ; but they soon removed my apprehension, and one told me that the Confederate government had built a fast-sailing steamer, and that she was now lying at Birkenhead, and would sail ere-long. She would sweep the seas of the Yankee ships, and the prize money would be enormous. Her crew would be picked men, all old man-o'-wars, and her speed would enable her to give the tow-rope to anything in the Yankee navy.

“How about the legality of this? Remember I hold English papers.”

“Legality, my dear sir? It's safe as houses; and if the infernal Yankees attempted to treat the crew as pirates, the British government would make short work of them.”

I intimated that I was n't anxious for a posthumous vindication, but they all agreed it was plain sailing. Now I remembered, with a sort of creepy feeling, that we had had a case of *sus. per coll.* in our family. An uncle of my grandmother, with a spirit of enterprise that might have made him a rich man in these times, left his boggy Lancashire farm, and took to levying tolls with a pistol and fast gray mare on the great North Road.

He was taken, and granny used to tell with pride that a song was made about him. I remember the first lines, —

“ Here I am laid up in jail,
And all for robbing of the Preston mail.”

He made the usual jail delivery by a rope and ladder, and his epitaph was, in granny's words, “ He kicked amaazin'.”

This is no doubt a poor world, and I fully believe there is another and better one; but I had no idea of getting into it by any such “ collar and elbow ” process as this. Moved by these reflections, I hastily arose from the table, and disregarding my host's entreaty to try some more of that old Madeira (palpable Marsala), — “ Cost me twenty shillin's a bottle at old Begum's sale, boy Jove,” — I promised to see them in the morning, and withdrew.

Next day, however, I forgot all this, and was full of the presumption of youth. The service promised plenty of adventure; I liked the cause, and was not indifferent to the prospect of prize money: so I called on Brennan, and got a note to a man named Stevenson, who was a shipping agent, and started off.

I found my man in a dingy office in one

of the alleys of the docks, and a comical, surly old grampus he was. He was smoking a short clay pipe, and the place was redolent with the fumes of the strongest shag tobacco. He tossed me a line to the officer in charge of the vessel and directed me how to go, and added: "Now belay yer jaw, and give any one that asks you anything about the ship a tip with yer flipper." I then asked, "When would she sail?" With withering sarcasm, "Oh, d—n ye, the cook will attend to that, and no doubt the captain will consult you; they allus does." With quarter-deck politeness I begged him "to give me a lock of his hair," and left the old bear, followed by a deep, rumbling volley of oaths. He was evidently an old merchant skipper, who looked upon a common sailor as his natural enemy, and treated him accordingly. I had half a mind to go back and wipe up the place with the old brute, but thought better of it, and made my way to Woodside Ferry.

I crossed over to Birkenhead, and walked a long way before coming to Laird's yard; there was no gate-keeper, and people were coming and going without let or hindrance. Everything seemed open and above-board.

At the dock lay a steamer, and on a board on the bow was painted "290;" this was my ship, the historic Alabama.¹

¹ "It would have been manifestly improvident and a purposeless waste of the limited resources of the Navy Department, to commission ships for distant and continuous cruising, unless they could carry ample stores of all necessities, especially of ordnance stores, and could sail as well as steam at a good rate of speed. A vessel without good sailing qualities, and without the arrangement and means for lifting her screw, would have been practically useless as a Confederate cruiser. She could only have made passages from one coal-ing station to another; and as she could only coal at a port of the same country once in three months, her career would soon have been brought to an untimely and not very creditable end.

"The necessities of the case, then, dictated the type of the Confederate ship, and the *Oreto* (Florida) and the 290 (Alabama) were especially designed to meet those requirements. . . . The general dimensions and other particulars of the *Alabama* were: length, 220 feet; breadth, 32 feet; draft, with all weights on board, 15 feet; tonnage, 1,040; engines, two horizontal, of 300 horse-power nominal, but on trial-trip indicated 1,000 horse-power. She was barque-rigged, with very long lower masts, to get large fore and aft sails. Her sails, carried at will, were as follows: fore, fore-topmast staysail and jib; two large try sails, the usual square sails on fore and main masts, with the exception of the main course, which was set flying; spanker and gaff-topsails; all standing rigging wire. She was admirably fitted in every respect; engines equal to admiralty standard; brass screw, Griffith's pattern, with lifting apparatus, and stowage in iron bunkers for 350 tons of coal. She was provided with a double suit of sails and the usual outfit for an East India voyage. She had five boats, including launch, cutter, and

She was evidently built for speed, something over two hundred feet long, with beau-

whale-boat, and ample ground tackle. She was well supplied with hawsers, and had spare blocks, runing gear, etc., to meet all requirements for at least a year. The engineer's stores and spare engine-gear were on the scale supplied to ships of the royal navy intended for long and distant voyages, and she was provided with condensing apparatus and cooling tank to supply fresh water. She was built of the very best materials, copper-fastened and coppered, and was finished in every respect as a first-class ship. I was satisfied in every particular with the manner in which the builders fulfilled their contract, and I believe she was as fine a vessel, and as well found, as could have been turned out of any dock-yard in the kingdom, equal to any of her Majesty's ships of corresponding class in structure and finish, and superior to any vessel of her date in fitness for the purposes of a sea-rover, with no home but the sea, and no reliable source of supply but the prizes she might make. The price paid to the Messrs. Laird, including the outfit, was £47,500, payable, by the terms of the contract, in five equal payments of £9,500 each ; and the last installment was made payable after satisfactory trial and delivery to me on the Mersey in the *port of Liverpool*. Every one who has had experience in the cost of ships will admit that the price named was not in the least degree excessive or unreasonable. I had previously superintended the construction of vessels of varying types, and I thought at the time, and am of the opinion now, that the contract price for the Alabama afforded only a fair commercial profit to the builders." — *The Secret Service of the Confederate States in Europe, or how the Confederate Cruisers were equipped*. By JAMES D. BULLOCH, naval representative of the Confederate States in Europe during the Civil War. London : Richard Bentley and Son, 1883. In two volumes. Vol. i. pp. 56, 61, 62.

tiful lines forward. She was sparred like a clipper, barque-rigged, with unusual long lower masts, to give her a fore-and-aft rig if required. She only required cross jack-yard and mizzen-topsails to make her a full-rigged ship.

I went aboard, and gave my note to a nautical-looking man in blue, on the quarter-deck, who said: "You will sign articles as soon as the captain comes aboard." He then ordered a man to get me a hammock, and sent me below. The berth deck seemed small, as the engines took up a good deal of room. The ship was full of workmen, who were evidently teasing time, as they were doing nothing but lounge around.

I went on deck and looked about. No one who had been on a man-o'-war but could see that the "290" was not intended for commerce. Her hatchways were too small, and shot-racks were fitted to the side. Her magazines were copper-lined and large for the size of the ship, while certain bolts in the main deck indicated where the gun platforms were to go.

We were daily inspected by customs officers, resplendent in bright lace and buttons ;

but it was a glaring farce, and always ended in the captain's cabin, where, judging by the clatter of glasses and the loud bursts of laughter heard forward, they must have found inspecting very pleasant work. They were treated with marked respect, and after getting over the side corkscrewed their devious way through the yard.

Well-dressed men were constantly coming and going, and all looked anxious and watchful. We were in fact surrounded with spies, and were strictly enjoined not to talk.¹

I got liberty for a day to go ashore and get my chest, and was spoken to by half a dozen different men ; always prefaced by an

¹ "The people who saw the 290 on the building-slip, and were attracted by her appearance, naturally talked about her, and no doubt remarks were often made in respect to her fitness for a cruiser; and it is not, therefore, surprising that she should have aroused the suspicions of those whose business it was to keep watch over the interests of the United States. I soon learned that spies were lurking about, and tampering with the workmen at Messrs. Laird, and that a private detective named Maguire was taking a deep and abiding interest in my personal movements ; but my solicitor assured me that there was nothing illegal in what I was doing, and there was nothing, therefore, to be done but to maintain a quiet reserve, to hasten the completion of the ship, and to get her away as soon as possible." — *Bulloch's The Secret Service of the Confederate States in Europe*, i. 227.

invitation "to take summut." I shook them off, however, and by night was back with my clothes.

I found five new men in the crew. One asked me whether I had artliced yet, and with him I soon got acquainted. He was a fine, intelligent looking man about thirty, but seemed worn and dissipated in appearance. I saw at once that he had not commenced life in the forecastle. His name was Mason, and when I spoke of our chances for getting away he said he was certain that we would not be stopped as long as we were not equipped, and in truth we had no guns aboard.

I had left £80 with my friend Brennan, and kept £10, and was permitted to get my meals on shore, but was warned not to go far away, as I might be wanted at any minute. I asked Mason to go with me ; he hung back, but finally went. We found an old-fashioned tavern quite near, and for four shillings got an excellent meal, and then I ordered some liquor. In a moment I saw my mistake ; my companion seized his glass with tremulous eagerness, and swallowed it in one gulp ; his manner changed, and he became communicative. How sad a history was his ! A lieu-

tenant in the royal navy, of good family and fine prospects. "I left the service, sir, — that's the phrase, — left the service; bowed up my jib too often, that's the truth! Lend me ten shillings, my boy, I have n't a penny in the world." I saw he was uncontrollable, and let him have the money and tried to get him back to the ship, but the curse of England was on him, and he vanished in the gathering darkness. As I had to stand anchor watch, I walked back thinking.

In China I had noted the difference between English and American men: the Yankee took his glass, and sometimes very many glasses, but he never seemed entirely to lose his self-respect and control; but his English brother over-drunk, and appeared to lose all self-restraint; sense and reason drowned, nothing was left but the mere instinct to drink.

There must be something wrong in the training and education of young Englishmen of the better class, they go to ruin with such facile readiness; go where you will, no matter how distant or desolate the land, there you will find the English gentlemen outcasts and tramps, "poor thriftless Reubens," every atom of manhood gone, and apparently with-

out the inclination, or will, to get back to the life they left; and their story is always the same, — drink, debt, and dishonor. Archdeacon Stanley said that sturdy moral courage was failing in the modern Englishman. He has less staying power for good, less of that precious Yankee quality of grit, than had his coarse-grained grandfathers. I am inclined to believe it.

Late next day, Mason was brought aboard by a policeman, sick and helpless, and I hurried him below and put him in his hammock, where he lay almost senseless until the next morning. We had another visitor the same day. About ten o'clock, a tall man, with gray hair covered with a gold-laced cap, came aboard. He spoke a few words to the officer in charge and at once came forward. He was evidently a naval officer, alert and resolute, and soon silenced the officer's explanations. He looked at the hatchways, shot-racks, and magazines, and, surveying the hammock hooks on the berth deck, said, "You'll have a large crew for a merchant steamer." We had taken on board some heavy oak plank that lay on the main deck; the officer remarked that they were for anchor stocks, and

was shortly answered, "Would n't make bad gun platforms, sir," which, indeed, was just what they were intended for. With a "Good morning, sir," our visitor mounted the side and was gone.

The effect of his visit was unmistakable. Messengers were sent off in hot haste, the men who were delivering coal from a lighter alongside were hurried up, and all hands were forbidden to leave ship. Towards night a load of trunks came to the side and were quickly got aboard, and a little later several strangers followed them aft. It was evident that we were preparing to leave; steam was escaping from the pipes, and every one was on the alert.

Night came on dark as a pocket, and at four bells, July 29, we steamed out into the Mersey. I was in the bow on lookout. Nothing was distinguishable on either shore except the lights of the vessels, but Mersey pilots run by instinct, and we soon struck the rolling waves of the Channel. We set our top-sail and jib and turned north. After a few hours' run the engines slowed down, and we were ordered to get out the port anchor. We came to off the Island of Anglesea, on the Welsh coast. We were now under com-

mand of a Captain Butcher,¹ and were ordered aft to sign articles. We were bound to go with the *Enrica*² (that was our new name) to Havana or an intermediate port, and the usual month's pay was laid down to us.

About four o'clock in the afternoon a tug came alongside loaded with men and women. All came aboard, and I wondered what we were to do with the women; but Mason enlightened me: "These are dock-side sirens, and must have Jack's advance pay or allotment ticket." A rough crowd they were. Many of the men and some of the women were half drunk, and their language was in keeping.

All hands went aft to sign articles, and in almost every case the women received the advance money. About ten o'clock the last man was paid, and the order was given to "clear ship." Sweet William parted with his

¹ Captain Mathew J. Butcher, then serving as first officer in a Cunard steamship.

² "The Spanish language furnishes a flexible and mellifluous equivalent for the Christian name of the lady who served the office [of christening], and when the ship got free of the blocks and glided down the ways, she had been christened *Enrica*." — Bulloch's *The Secret Service of the Confederate States in Europe*, i. 229.

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black-eyed Susan in a very easy and nonchalant manner, and Susan straddled over the side in a way that showed her nautical training.

The tug left us with a cheer, the women screaming "Good-by" and "Good luck." Our anchor came up and we headed north, under a southwest breeze. We set top-sails, stay-sail, and spanker, and rapidly made way.

I filled my lungs with the clear salt breeze that blew aft. It made me exultant, like strong wine, and I could have shouted. What a glorious thing it is to be young and strong and fearless; "far as the breeze can bear, or billow roam," the world's our own!

Watches were set and I went below. Mason and I debated about the speed of the ship, and both agreed that we were not making over twelve knots, if that.

Next morning we looked over the crew and judged them about forty in number. We were in a bad state to meet a Yankee now, as we had not, apparently, a musket aboard. We ran through the north channel and off the Irish coast. Several of the officers that came down on the tug left us. Lieutenant Hamilton was executive officer, an American.

We were soon off the north point of Ireland,¹ and then we made our course west and south, and in nine days we came in sight of land. This was Terceira, one of the Azores, and we found our voyage was ended, and we were free from our engagements.

II.

I knew that many of the crew were by no means anxious to extend the cruise. Jack ashore may be very simple and gullible, but afloat he knows very well what he's about. Some argued that the vessel would steer clear of ports, and that the service would be long and monotonous, without liberty; and then we were all in serious doubt as to the view that Americans would take of the matter, and although my Liverpool friends affected to deride the Yankee navy, every sailor aboard knew well the courage and seamanship of the Americans, and did not care to underrate them, and Mason said truly, that so long as England was doing a large trade with Amer-

¹ This course was taken to avoid the U. S. S. *Tuscarora*, Captain Craven, which had left Southampton, and was supposed to be intending to be somewhere in St. George's Channel to intercept the *Enrica*.

ican ports, she was not likely to quarrel, no matter if a Yankee cruiser hung the whole of us. So many of us were undecided.

We made a good anchorage in the landlocked harbor of Porto Praya, and the crew got liberty to go ashore, and behaved like pirates. The people were a poor feeble set, and our officers could only remonstrate, as they had no authority over the men. A Yankee schooner came in port, but some one gave the skipper a hint, and with a "By gosh!" he tumbled aboard his vessel and put out to sea like a startled bird.

A few days after, a fine barque, the *Agripina*,¹ came in, loaded with stores, ammunition,

¹ "About the end of May a suitable agent was instructed to look up a moderately-sized sailing vessel in London, fit for a West Indian voyage, to carry heavy weights. She was to be staunch and in good condition; but high finish not wanted, and a clipper not required. We got just the craft, a barque of about four hundred to four hundred and fifty tons. Her recommendation was that she had lately brought home ordnance stores, old guns, shot, etc., from Gibraltar on government account. She was bought, and in due time was entered out from London to Demerara. The agent was ordered to put three hundred and fifty tons of coal in her, and the necessary shipping orders were given to the parties holding the *Alabama's* goods. Our barque was named *Agripina*, and she attracted no especial notice and no suspicion while loading in the London docks. It was easy to regulate the forwarding of the cargo and the lading, so as to fit in

and six thirty-two-pounders. After some persuasion the men went to work, and in two days had everything on board our own vessel ; but they were very insolent and unruly.

A steamer arrived August 20th flying the British flag. This was the Bahama, and she had our officers and crew on board.


If it was bad before, it was worse now. The new-comers behaved like savages, the wretched shanty where liquor was sold was turned inside out, and the owner ran for his life. The people barred their doors or made for the hills. I had in my experience seen men act disgracefully, but never as bad as this. One scoundrel took after a girl about ten years old ; her long black hair streamed out behind as she ran. I put after them with an oaken barrel stave that I had picked up on the beach, and as the man was about to clutch the girl I hit him, knocking him senseless. The poor little thing was too frightened to speak, and made for the hills like a deer. I believe the Portuguese governor remonstrated with our officers for turning such a gang loose on the islands,

with the movements of the *Enrica* at Liverpool, without creating the suspicion that there was any connection between the two vessels." — Bulloch's *Secret Service*, i. 237.

and ordered him to take his ships out of the bay.

All were now ordered to come forward and sign articles, or go aboard of the *Bahama* for passage back to England. Much haggling and hanging back was shown, but the pay was liberal, £4 10s. per month, and about one hundred were shipped, and all went on board the *Alabama*, for so our ship was named in the new articles. I went with the rest, having made up my mind, and poor Mason, who had managed to get drunk again, said "It mattered little what became of him," and so we were shipmates once more.

In obedience to the governor's orders, we ran out to sea about four miles, and began to take on board the two pivot guns that the *Bahama* had brought from England. Now it took very good seamanship to handle these heavy guns in a rolling sea. The rifle gun was ten feet long and weighed over four tons, and the eight-inch shell gun was considerably heavier; in fact, she was an old sixty-eight-pounder bored out, — a useless old blunderbuss. The crew did this quite as well as man-o'-war's men would have done, and we got in the carriages and fittings without loss.



Everything was hurried to get the ship in a working condition. The pivot guns were mounted; the eight-inch on the quarter deck, and the seven hundred pound rifle amidships. This last was a fine gun, fitted with compressors, elevating screw, and all the gun improvements up to that time. Its range was four thousand yards, and true as a sporting rifle, and as easily handled. We were pierced for twelve guns, but mounted eight—six thirty-two-pounders—of the old pattern, such as we worked on the gun deck of the *Britannia* during the Russian war, and they were of little penetrating power over six hundred yards.

The change that has taken place in the size and weight of ship's ordnance in my time is very great indeed. In 1857, the eight-inch shell gun of sixty-five hundred weight was regarded as dangerous to handle on shipboard, by reason of its weight, and was supposed to mark the limit of effective size. Now we carried one hundred ton guns. An attempt to introduce heavier ordnance in the navy during the Russian war was rejected. An Irish member of the board that had the matter in charge proposed to compromise by making the thirty-two pound weigh thirty-four pounds, "*be dad.*"

Lord Cochrane, in the old Banger Bug, ran out of twelve-pound shot, and substituted round Dutch cheese (known in the middy's mess of the British navy as "Rotterdam Rocks"), and took a French corvette, nearly frightening the Crapeau's life out of him with the novel explosive. The smell had something to do with it, no doubt, as they were dreadfully fragrant.

This led a Captain Barnes to offer to the Admiralty Ordnance Board a "disintegrating shot," and he was frank enough to tell where he got his idea; but the old Benbows and Camperdowns who ruled all sea matters in those days rejected the novelty.

Barnes was what is now known as a crank, and when one of the board suggested that grape-shot was good enough to knock a man's brain out with, Barnes replied tartly, "that there was no danger of such a catastrophe happening to any of the board, as he did n't believe that any of them had any brains," and his reign was short.

In truth, the men that ruled the British navy thirty years ago were a set of obstructive old noodles. They had been master-mates in the beginning of the century, and rose by

seniority; they had no minds to fret "their sturdy bodies to decay," so they lived on and tiddled old port, and obstructed all attempts at improvement until the press got hold of them, and drove them into retirement.

Sunday, August 24, all hands were piped aft. The officers came out in gray uniforms, handsomely laced, and we had a chance to have a good look at our commander, Captain Semmes. He was middle-aged, about five feet nine inches in height, and had a fine presence, and by reason of a pair of wonderfully pointed moustaches looked more like a Frenchman than an American.

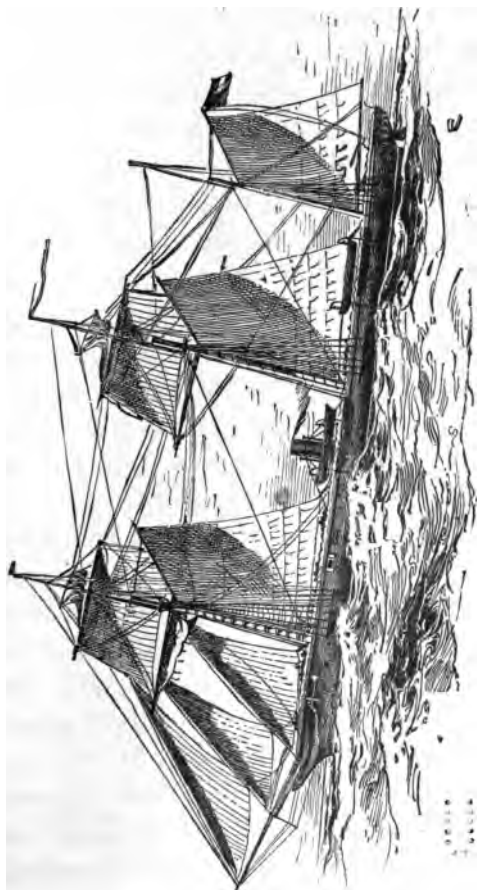
Our executive officer, Armstrong, was an Englishman,¹ as were two of the masters, Fullam and Wilson; all thorough sailors. The first lieutenant Mr. Kell, and second lieutenants Low and Hamilton, were Americans, as were the marine officer and midshipmen.

Captain Semmes made a speech to the crew, and talked precisely as if he were commanding an English man-o'-war. He spoke

¹ The author is in error here, for Captain Semmes, in his *Memoirs of Service Afloat*, states that Armstrong was a Georgian.

of the glory won by British seamen, their hatred of oppression, and told us of the horrors of the war as waged by the North against the Confederacy, and indicated the grand career before us, and much more that I cannot remember, and in fact did not hear, as his pronounciation was distinctively American. Then the band struck up "Dixie," the Confederate flag with its starry bars and white centre was run up, and the captain proclaimed the Confederate steam-sloop Alabama ready for service. We all cheered and the musicians banged away, but they evidently thought with Falstaff that "time was made for slaves and they would have none of it."

When Bismarck ordered the expulsion of the Frenchmen from Alsace after the annexation to Germany, he said that an attachment to the spot where one was born was a mere sentiment, irrational and foolish, and could have but little weight where great interests were at stake. I think most Americans are of his opinion, and have no excessive pride in their nationality, not as much as Englishmen, certainly. Here was Captain Semmes, who had commanded an American man-o'-war, addressing his crew as Englishmen, and urging them



CONFEDERATE STATES STEAMER ALABAMA.



to do their best to injure and disgrace his own countrymen. No English officer would do that, I think, under any circumstances.

The watch bill was made out, and Mason and I fortunately got into the same watch, the starboard or captain's. The petty officers were first rate seamen and good men, and like young bears had all their troubles before them, for they are brought into immediate contact with the crew, and are in a manner responsible for their behavior, and you will see hereafter that their positions were by no means as satisfactory as that of the hungry pig that was shut up by mistake in the granary.

The men were stationed, and all the routine of a man-o'-war was gone through. Merchant seamen soon fall into this, but to greenhorns and landsmen it must be very bewildering for a time. However, restrictions sat easily on the men that manned the Alabama, and we very soon got into a "go as you please" habit that was maintained to the end. I had now a chance to look over the men who were to be my messmates for an indefinite time. Mason was right, it was a "scratch crew," and such a one as can be had at any time in Liverpool through crimps and shipping agents.

The major part of them were evidently seamen, stout, hardy fellows, and the rest dock-side loafers and turnpike sailors. Any one familiar with the roads leading out of Brighton and Margate will recognize these last. They are picturesquely nautical in their talk, and have always a blood-curdling story of shipwreck and disaster to tell, and will occasionally tip you a stave commencing, —

“With brave old Cappen Benbow
I sailed the fighting *Terpsichore*,
Whose loss true British seamen
Will ever more deplore.”

I need not say that they are always thirsty and penniless. These are the characters that figure in the “cruelty log” in merchant ships. They article as ordinary seamen, and have most likely never stepped a spar, and their officers soon find this out, and to correct their deficiencies beat them blind and silly.

The real seamen were nearly all “run sailors,” as most of the “Dicky Sands” (a cant name amongst shipping men for “Liverpudlians”) are; that is, they ship from port to port, and a more reckless and desperate set do not exist. No wonder most American vessels making north Atlantic voyages are manned by

this class, and it is the hardest service afloat. When sailing vessels did most of the American trade, head-winds and bad weather often kept them fifty days in the "rolling forties." Provisions and water would get scarce, and captains and mates would vent their ill humor on their wretched crews. Given a ship under these circumstances, with a "blue-nose captain" and Yankee-Irish mates, and it would more than likely be a floating hell. Grub might get short, but belaying pins never gave out, and deeds would be done that are hard to believe and horrible to narrate. English law protected the common sailor on board British vessels, but the Land of Freedom vouchsafed them no protection whatever. Listen to some old sailor telling of "Bully Waterman" and his mate Douglas, of Allison and Plugger Smith, and you will wonder that such demons could live; and yet one of these men, the worst I believe of the lot, died two years ago a prosperous, thriving gentleman, and a millionaire, and of course "universally respected." But this was twenty years ago, and though at the present day sailors are still ill used, principally in American ships, they may not be murdered without penalties. British

captains will not ship these run men for long voyages if they can help it, but such as they were, they made up the efficient part of the Alabama crew.

They were mostly English, with a few Irish, Danes, and one Russian or Finn, whose real name he told us was Jackalanwiski. This jawbreaker was at once translated "Jack-o'-Lantern," and so he was known. There is not as much individuality amongst English as American seamen, and this is no doubt due to the want of ambition amongst the Britons. They are sailors by training and descent, and seldom care to rise above this condition. The American is generally better educated, and after three or more voyages he recognizes how hard and ungainful is his calling, and he leaves the sea and seeks better conditions ashore. If his English cousins have one trait of character more marked than another, it is a love of fighting; not the yelling, pitch-in, Irish row, but a square stand up, give and take, till one gives in, then shake hands and forget it. I have known one of these encounters to last the best part of an hour, and to be conducted so quietly, all hands assisting, that nothing of it was known aft; in fact, the

police of the ship, boatswain, mates, and master at arms, no doubt often knew what was going on, but did not come below and meddle; in the words of old McCaskie, "Blast 'em, let 'em slug one another's heads off. It will keep them out of mischief." And he was right, for it did. These turnups always came off on the berth deck, forward of the foremast, and I never saw an unfair advantage taken.

III.

We were now in the north Atlantic, and might expect bad weather and rough seas, and we were not disappointed; but I was surprised to find that our vessel was likely to be a very leaky tub. In truth, she had been built in a hurry, and the warm weather at the Azores had shrunk her timbers and opened her seams, and it was caulk, caulk, until our main deck looked like a collier's, and one of the men declared that "if it got wuss, we would have to wear pig-yokes to keep from slipping through the cracks."

We now began to drill the men at the guns, and as soon as they were stationed, I saw that the A. B.'s and navy reserves that

were to give us an exceptionally fine crew were absent. Not one man in ten had ever handled a gun tackle before, and as I was acting as assistant sword master, I found them equally ignorant of cutlass-drill. Soon the ship resounded with "right," "left," "right parry," "head protect." Some of them were deadly slow, but the officers were patient and forbearing, and finally got them into form, but it was in effect a merchant crew. The berth deck was small by reason of the space taken up by the engines. It was about sixty feet by thirty-two, and when at mess we were fairly "chock-a-block."

It took some little time for the men to "splice in" with one another, and the bad traits of many of the crew soon came out. The bullies commenced to haze the quieter men, and tried to impose on all but the captain of our mess. A Scotchman named M'Gregor¹ put a stop to it in our watch by seizing one or two ruffians, throwing them up till their heels struck the carlines, and then dashing them on the deck, banging the life

¹ This name has been substituted for the real name of the man. All genuine M'Gregors will please accept the editor's apology.

right out of them for the time. "He did n't care a snap for the muffs that could n't pull their pound, but it annoyed the rest, and must stop." Indeed, the law between decks was that of the strongest, and God help the weak ones ; they would have been as well off in a pirate ship, as no reporting was allowed.

M'Gregor was a character. He must have been fifty, but his powerful frame showed no touch of age. Short in stature, he had Atlantean shoulders, measuring fifty inches around the chest, and his grip would squeeze the tar out of a rope. His greatest pleasure was arguing about religion ; he was a rigid Calvinist, and the mess watch below reëchoed with the clash of opinions about "fate, free-will, and foreknowledge absolute." Language was free, and the profanity was dreadful ; in fact, some of the men seemed to have a special gift that way, and one man declared that if he had his own way "he could cuss the flukes off an anchor."

Old M'Gregor was no doubt a good specimen of the Scotch Covenanter of the olden time, but all his religion did not prevent him from being the worst man I ever met, — a cool remorseless, determined villain ; and he told

me once, with his usual hard, incisive speech, "that he would cut the throat of his father if enough money was forthcoming."

He never exaggerated in telling his adventures, but he had been a slaver, a mutineer, and a wrecker on the Windward Islands, and that is only another name for a pirate; and in truth, the story of his life was an epic of crime and desperate adventure. He had a hard, colorless face, and light gray eyes that seemed covered with a film like a snake's; when excited they glittered under his shaggy brows with a sinister, venomous light.

We were now in the latitude of New York, and kept a sharp lookout from the top-gallant yard for prizes, as we were in the track of commerce between the States and Europe. The weather was bad, and the heavy rollers, despite our high free board, deluged us with water.

On the morning of the 5th of September the cry of "Ship ahoy!" from the mast-head brought all hands on deck. Sure enough, about two miles to the leeward of us was a fine barque, at once pronounced a "spouter" (whaler) and an American. In order to save coal — of which very essential article we had

about three hundred tons aboard — we never used our screw unless absolutely necessary, and it was generally raised. We were on the starboard tack, and with a fresh breeze soon came within range. We had the American flag set, and the chase showed the Stars and Stripes. A gun was fired, and as we came within hail we gave the order, "Back your main-sail; I'll send a boat on board of you."

"Cutter away," and the boat came down from the davits, and we pulled for our first prize. It soon became a vain thing and tiresome, but this our first essay was a novelty, and we made the stretchers buckle, with our impatience to get aboard. The bowman hooked on to the chains, and we went up the side like cats. When we got aft the captain asked, in a dazed sort of manner, "Why — why — what does this mean?" The master, Fullam, replied: "You are prize to the Confederate steamer Alabama, Captain Semmes commanding. I'll trouble you for your papers." Now this man had been four years out, and had no doubt heard of the trouble at home; but he could not realize this, and he stared and said, "Confederate government —

Alabama — why, that's a State," and then was sternly told to get his papers.

We were ordered to put the crew in irons, and they too seemed utterly dumfounded; and one poor fellow said to me "Must I lose all my clothes?" I answered "Yes," but advised him to put on all he could, and if he had any money to slip it in his boot. "Money! I hain't seen a dollar for three years, but I am obliged to ye all the same." In the meantime one of the Alabamas had got some liquor out of the cabin, and as the sea was pretty rough, I notified our officer. A pull in a heavy sea with a drunken crew was not pleasant to anticipate, and we bundled the prisoners over the side and got in ourselves. Four of our men felt the liquor, and were pretty drunk by the time we got to our ship. They were at once disarmed and ironed, not without a struggle, and put in the brig. Another crew took the cutter and returned to the barque, which was named the Ocmulgee, and collecting old cordage and tar set her on fire. She was loaded with oil, and when it caught, a high column of dense black smoke poured out the hatchways, and spread in vast involutions to the leeward. Soon

the red forked flames began to climb her masts, and her spars glowed with light ; with a crash the main-mast fell, carrying the foremast with it, and sending a shower of sparks high in the air, her stout sides seemed to burst open, and what was a stately ship was now a blackened hulk, the rising sea breaking in white caps over it, and at last, with a surge and wallow, sinking out of sight.

The American captain stood at one of the lee ports looking at the destruction of his vessel, and his weather-beaten face looked drawn and ashen in hue. I was very sorry for him, although sailors that have sailed in Yankee ships look upon a captain's troubles without emotion, generally ; but his crew spoke very well of this man.

I have been particular in describing this, as it is a fair account of the manner by which we secured nearly all our prizes. Sometimes a man would make a fight over his chest ; it was no use, he was at once knocked down and secured ; but I have many a time wished to use my cutlass on some mean black-guard, who seemed to take delight in smashing some little keepsake — scrimshander work in wood or bone, mostly — that a prisoner

would try and keep. Captive crews were not often ill used ; but that is a relative word, and shore people might not agree with me in what constitutes ill usage. In fact, our men were a rough lot, and but for fear of consequences would no doubt have acted worse ; but the officers one and all never forgot what was due to themselves as brave, upright gentlemen.

I don't believe we made fifty pounds out of this prize, unless, indeed, as the champion liar on board our vessel declared, the " Yankee captain had a pair of gold knuckle dusters set with dimuns wuth two hundred and ninety-nine pounds sterling." When he was asked " why he did n't make it even money," he declared, with conscious integrity, " that he was n't goin' to tell a lie for a pound, nohow."

Sunday we were mustered, and the articles of war were read to us. As two thirds of the offences enumerated " shall be punished by death," the green hands listened attentively ; but the older men stuck their tongues in their cheeks, as the sea lawyers among the crew had already decided that we were only a " jury man-o'-war, and Captain Semmes would not dare to inflict the usual penalties on Eng-

lish subjects. Ignorant as many of the men were in sea matters they were often shrewd and sensible.¹ The question was debated also

¹ "The next day, Sunday, dawned beautiful and bright, and the Alabama . . . mustered her crew for the first time. . . . This was the first reading of the articles of war to them, and it was curious to observe the attention with which they listened to the reading, occasionally eying each other, as they were struck by particular portions of them. These articles, which were copied from similar articles, for the 'Better Government of the Navy of the United States,' were quite severe in their denunciations of crime. The penalty of death frequently occurred in them, and they placed the power of executing this penalty in the hands of the captain and a court-martial. Jack had already had a little foretaste of discipline, in the two weeks he had been on board; the first lieutenant having brought several of them to the 'mast,' whence they had been sent into confinement by me, for longer or shorter intervals, according to the grade of their offences; and he now began more distinctly to perceive that he had gotten on board a *ship of war*, instead of the *privateer* he had supposed the Alabama to be, and that he would have to toe a pretty straight mark. It is with a disorderly crew, as with other things, the first blows are the most effective. I had around me a large staff of excellent officers, who always wore their side-arms and pistols, when on duty, and from this time onward we never had any trouble about keeping the most desperate and turbulent characters in subjection. My code was like that of the Medes and Persians: it was never relaxed. The moment a man offended, he was seized and confined in irons, and if the offence was a grave one, a court-martial was sitting on his case in less than twenty-four hours." — Semmes's *Memoirs of Service Afloat*, pp. 426, 427.

where the prize money was to come from if we burnt all our captures? If the Alabama was a real man-o'-war, why did n't they send their prizes into British ports. The oil on the Ocmulgee was worth twenty thousand pounds, anyhow, and what was the use of taking prizes, if we were not to benefit by them? and here the speaker raised his voice, declaring that the "Dandy Dickies aft were a set of green-horns, that had paid their debts ashore with the top-sail sheet, and run away and come to sea to get watches apiece from the Yankee skippers, and did n't care whether their crew made a living or not." This was received with a yell of applause that brought a petty officer to the after companion-way to know what was going on. His question was received with derision, and he was told to go to Jamaica and mind his own business.

IV.

We were now taking prizes daily, and were filling up with prisoners. Off the Isle of Flores we had three burning at the same time.

Amongst the prisoners was a mate of a whaler that was a comical figure — the Yan-

kee of English farces. He was over six feet, with huge bones that seemed to have no flesh on them, and he wore a high-collared, long-tailed, claw-hammer coat, with brass buttons as big as ring-bolts. He used to sit on the deck and spell out hymns from a book and hum them over, and to cap all, he wore a tall beaver hat. Of course this was abhorrent to sailor etiquette. They could stand longshore togs, all but the tall hat, and so one day one of the men knocked the white tile over the Yankee's eyes. He was brought up in the wind at a rate that astonished him. In ten seconds himself and an applauding friend were laid out on the deck, the big Yankee offering at the same time to whip any man forward of the mizzen-mast, and I believe he could have done it. It was generally admitted that he had done right, and thereafter he wore his tall hat without molestation.

Sunday, September 14 [1862]. Took a large whaler, and were now crowded with prisoners. As the berth deck was fully occupied by the crew, the captives were obliged to live on the main deck under a temporary shelter made of a spare try-sail rigged on spars.

Two days after, we took a large schooner, and tried our guns on her at six hundred yards. The practice was poor enough, and I felt sure that if we ran across a Yankee man-o'-war we would most likely be knocked to pieces.

We had a spell of wretched bad weather for seven or eight days, and our pumps were clanging all day ; the prisoners were drenched with the heavy rollers that swept over our bulwarks.

About the 1st of October weather cleared, and we captured two large cotton ships, the Brilliant and Farnum, and we began to pick up recruits among the prize crews.

Our next prize was peculiar for several reasons. It was the brig Dunkirk, and the prize crew got gloriously drunk and defied their officers, and we had to send the launch to bring the revellers back. Amongst the crew of the Dunkirk was a former deserter from the Confederate privateer Sumter a year before. He was recognized by Lieutenant Maffit, and put in double irons and placed in the brig (ship's jail). His name was George Forest. He was promptly tried by court-martial, and sentenced to lose his pay and be kept

on board without liberty to go ashore. When the dauntless vagabond came forward he joined our mess, and laughed at his sentence.

A ship is a little cosmos, and men rule their fellows in the forecabin by strength of arm or resolute courage, just as they do ashore; still I have known a slinking, snarling rascal, neither brave nor strong, control his messmates by sheer force of wickedness. His ever-working and malignant will seemed to awe the men into submission to his caprices.

George Forest was, I think, an American-Irishman, and had all the qualities that make a man a leader amongst sailors. He was very powerful, and utterly fearless and reckless, and had beside a faculty often found in uneducated men of influencing and leading his associates. He had a murderous hatred of the captain, and would not, I think, have hesitated to kill him if the opportunity had offered. It was a great mistake to send him forward, as he at once became a leader in disorder and disaffection.

I had heard some whispers of one of the officers being distrusted by his fellows, but only now did I get at the bottom of the rumor.

A young man was paymaster on the Alabama. From his duties he was brought into contact with the men, and was quite familiar in his manners. Now Jack may be a blackguard himself, but he likes his officers to be gentlemen, and there is no better way by which an officer may lose his prestige and power of commanding the respect of his men than by becoming familiar with them.¹

Forest at once began to incite his messmates to mutiny, and one of the men surprised us by telling that Mr. Yonge, the paymaster, had told him that the United States

¹ It is not impossible that Mr. Yonge, the gentleman in question, was rendered over-zealous by the instructions which he received from Mr. Bulloch: "When the Alabama is fairly at sea," the agent wrote, "you will mix freely with the 'warrant and petty officers,' show interest in their comfort and welfare, and endeavor to excite their interest in the approaching cruise of the ship. Talk to them of the Southern States, and how they are fighting against great odds for only what every Englishman enjoys — *liberty*! Tell them at the port of destination a distinguished officer of the Confederate States navy will take command of the ship for a cruise, in which they will have the most active service, and be well taken care of. I do not mean that you are to make the men set speeches, or be constantly talking to them, but in your position you may frequently throw out to leading men hints of the above tenor, which will be commented upon on the berth deck. Seamen are very impressionable, and can be easily influenced by a little tact and management."

government would pay a million of dollars for bringing the Alabama into a Northern port. Although I don't believe that Forest ever spoke three words to Yonge, still he intimated that it was arranged between them.

Some time before this we had in our mess a mean, low-browed fellow, who claimed to be a cockney and a sailor. Excited no doubt by the terrible stories about murder and mutiny that he heard his messmates tell, he imparted to us one night an exploit of his own that he no doubt regarded as quite as legitimate as any of M'Gregor's adventures. He had been hard up in London, and coming across a shop girl going home, he bravely knocked her down and wrenched her poor wages, some five shillings, from her hand. For an instant all looked at the hound, and then he was levelled with a bread kiddy, and kicked all over the deck. The gentlemen adventurers of the Alabama drew the line at petty larceny. The fellow was told to mess by himself, as we did n't want any "Limehouse lags" in our society.

Forest wanted discretion ; in fact, the man had no sense of fear, and never cared to lower his voice, so that the entire berth deck was

taken into his confidence. This outcast was always loitering around, and once I caught a flash from his sunken black eyes that indicated more intelligence than was desirable. M'Gregor had joined hands with Forest at once, and ways and means were nightly discussed, and all the stoutest and most dangerous men in both watches were in the plot. Forest was warned that there was a spy about, and the man was hinted at. So one night Forest caught the cockney listening, and with a grasp on his throat warned him that if he told anything he heard on the berth deck aft, his infernal life would be knocked out of him. The miserable man was too frightened to speak, but managed to gasp out that he had n't said a word, and did n't know anything ; then Forest let him go. All the same, the officers knew all that was going on, beyond a doubt.

The plan was this, and a very foolish, reckless plot it was : to seize one of the forward guns, load her with kentledge, and fire it right aft through the starboard cabin, and then make a rush for the quarter deck. But the arms were kept aft, and latterly the sentries had been doubled, and the warrant offi-

ers wore cutlasses and pistols while on duty, and this change in the daily routine was very significant. Still, if fifty men of the crew would have united, it could have been done, as a show of success would have brought the others. Then the plan was to run west under sail, and make the harbor of Baltimore or New York. Mason had a good share in spoiling this game by pointing out the improbability of its success, and by so doing earned the deep, deadly hatred of the Scotchman, all the more dangerous that it was repressed.

I was rather surprised at Mason's trepidation, and spoke to him about it, when the poor fellow told me that dissipation had broken down his nerve, and he dreaded incurring the ill-will of any of the men from sheer want of hardihood. I advised him to leave the ship at the first opportunity, as it was no place for a weak man, and the ruffians would soon find out his infirmity, and then God help him.

So far the mutiny was not a success, and we saw very little of Yonge, although one of the men claimed to be in communication with him; but one thing followed, and that was

an increase of insubordination and disorder, and it never ceased while we were afloat. Captain Semmes was certainly no ordinary man, and that he managed to control his crew and keep it in working order is the best evidence possible of his exceptional courage, resolution, and seamanship.

Sunday was our eventful day throughout the cruise, and October 9th we took the ship *Tonawanda*, an old Liverpool packet. She was full of passengers, and we kept her by us for two days, taking and destroying two other vessels in the mean time. As the *Tonawanda* could not well be burned on account of her passengers, she was bonded and made a cartel, we putting our prisoners aboard, and she filled her sails and was soon out of sight. The bond was worth, I suppose, about threepence, although had the South established her independence it could have been collected.

We now saw bad weather ahead, the barometer falling rapidly, and for eight days we had storm enough to do us for the rest of the year. Our vessel lay over so that the decks were as steep as the roof of a house, and we had to lash ourselves to keep on

board. At the worst, the weather main brace parted, and the main-yard broke in the slings. away went top-sail and foretop-mast stay-sail, and at one time I thought our foretop-mast would follow, but our men were sailors, and we cleared away the wreck and set our try-sail to keep her head up, and got her in trim again. About October 25 the gale broke, and we had a chance to dry our clothing.

Next day we took a large Boston ship and burned her. I think our captain took especial pleasure in taking and destroying New England ships, although I was unable to see why one State in the North was more objectionable to the Confederates than another; but I believe that many of the Northerners had the same feeling for my native State of South Carolina.

We soon sighted and chased a large top-sail schooner that slipped through the water like a sword-fish. Had her officers had more nerve she would have got away, as, if well handled, she could have eaten the wind right out of us. From her rig, a schooner can sail much closer to the wind than a square rigged vessel, but the Yankee was scared by the flash of our guns, although our shot did not

go within three hundred yards of his hull. So he came to, and we got a crew on board of her, and found her captain well-nigh frightened out of his wits.

As a general thing, the captains of our prizes took it very coolly, occasionally remarking that but for the American flag at the mizzen we would not have got within shooting distance of them, while one big broad-shouldered fellow declared that, keep away the guns of the Alabama, he and his crew could lick all hands on the Confederate vessel, and he looked as if he would like to try it, too.

We were now about two hundred miles east of New York. One thing we did get from our prizes, and that was plenty of provisions, and we lived much better than sailors do generally.

It was now November 9, and running south we had fair weather, and began to feel the northeast trade-winds. On the 18th we came in sight of Martinique, and when we got in we found the barque Agrippina waiting for us with coal. We got liberty to go ashore, and in twenty minutes were fighting the police; and as I detest the French I was by no means averse to having a row with them. The warrant officers and ship's police had a

bad time, as many of the men came aboard drunk and fought desperately.

The next day our liberty was stopped, and at night, after the order was given to "out lights," a party collected at one of the forward starboard ports, and Forest was lowered into the water, and swam ashore for a supply of liquor. Now sharks are plenty in these waters, and I watched the desperate fellow's course expecting every moment to see a black fin cutting the water in his wake, but he got ashore, and in about an hour came back with a five-gallon can of rum. It was awful stuff, but it was drunk by the entire watch, the lights were at once lit, and the yelling and uproar commenced. A rush was made for the main deck, and as the men had belaying pins, sand clubs, and slung-shots, the officers had hard work to keep them down. At last the drums beat to quarters, and the marines and officers forced their way below. M'Gregor was quite sober, and active in the fight, and incited the men to stand their ground. He pitched a belaying pin at one of the master's-mates that barely missed him, and cut a manrope in two. Mason and I got forward behind the fore-mast, as I expected to hear

the order to fire every minute. It was *pitch* dark, as all the lights were knocked out, the decks crowded with fighting, yelling men, surging back and forward, making a perfect pandemonium. The larboard watch came down armed with buckets, and deluged the mutineers with water, and this was more effectual than any other weapon save cold steel. It took five stout men to put Forest in irons, and I was glad to see M'Gregor rendered harmless by a lick from a belaying pin that would have stove in the head of most men. Next morning the place looked like the shambles, and many of the men of our watch were badly cut up. All refused to "peach" on their messmates. But an investigation followed, and Forest was convicted of leaving the ship and bringing liquor on board, and was seized up in the rigging. The better class of men were tired of the rowing, and would have gladly seen severe and adequate punishment meted out to the ringleaders. M'Gregor and several others were a week in double irons, and came out very sulky and defiant.¹

¹ Captain Semmes, in his *Memoirs of Service Afloat*, gives an account of this drunken row, but states that the sousing

v.

We now had news that put us on the alert. A Yankee man-o'-war, the *San Jacinto*, was reported outside waiting for us. The officers of the French corvette that lay here did all they could to aid us in evading the enemy, but the American officers must have blundered badly to let us get away as we did. Indeed, the American navy showed to very little advantage throughout our cruise, and I think showed very little enterprise except in chasing the blockade runners. The credit for superior pluck and seamanship is justly due the Confederate navy.

Signals were made nightly from the mast-head of an American vessel that lay here, and

of the mutineers with cold water was done upon a score of the men who had already been put in irons ; it was not in the nature of repelling of an attack, but of punishment, and of bringing men to their senses. The mutineers at first derided the performance, but as the cold water continued to pour down on them, they began to beg for mercy. "I held off a little while," says Captain Semmes, "as if inexorable to their prayers and entreaties, the better to impress upon them the lesson I was teaching them, and then ordered them to be released. When their irons were taken off they were sober enough to go below to their hammocks, without another word, and 'turn in' like good boys ! It took me some time to get through with this operation, for I had the delinquents — about a dozen of the most noisy — soused one at a time."

as we steamed out two lanterns were sent up to the mast-head by the Yankee captain. We were all at quarters, and expected to be attacked, and were still as death; but an hour passed, and no enemy appearing, we went ahead full steam without apprehension.

In two days we reached Blanquilla Island and coaled. It was hard work, two-hour watches. We burned about eighteen tons per day when under steam.

While here, Forest was court-martialled, and, instead of being shot, was dismissed in disgrace, which no doubt was very harrowing to his feelings. Twenty pounds was raised for him, and as he was leaving the ship he was not sparing of speech, but gave his opinion of officers and crew. Now from this time forth the men felt assured that the man-o'-war regulations were a mere show, and that beyond sending ashore, and putting in irons, their officers did not dare punish them, and discipline suffered in consequence.¹

¹ Captain Semmes gives this brief account of Forest's dismissal: "The reader may recollect that we captured, in the brig Dunkirk, a deserter from the Sumter. We had tried him by court-martial before reaching Martinique, and sentenced him to serve out his term, under certain penalties. At Martinique we found him a chief spirit among the muti-

We now started north, running east of the Leeward Islands, and cruised north of Hayti. We saw a large steamer coming out of the Windward passage, and went to quarters, sure that we had met an enemy, but she turned out to be Spanish. We steamed back and went into the Caribbean Sea through the Mona passage. This was a daring undertaking for Captain Semmes, for one has only to look at the map of the West Indies to see that a solitary man-o'-war, like the Alabama, would have a very poor chance against a fleet of cruisers, if commanded by vigilant officers and good sailors. For we could have been shut in by a frigate stationed at the Mona passage, and another at the Windward; and where was the San Jacinto that she did not look in here. But we were permitted to range these land-locked seas at will, and capture and destroy without let or hindrance.

We took a large schooner just after clearneers, whose grog I had 'watered,' as described in the last chapter. Another court now sat upon his case, and, in obedience to its sentence, the fellow was turned upon the beach at Blanquilla, with 'bag and hammock.' This worthy citizen of the great Republic joined the Yankee whaling schooner, and went into more congenial company and pursuits."—*Memoirs of Service Afloat*, p. 519.

ing the straits and tried our guns on her. There was no improvement; the men were slouchy and careless, and at one thousand yards fired clean over the top-mast of the target.

Sunday was our lucky day, for on December 7 we saw a large steamer running south. We got up steam, and setting the United States flag, put towards her. Her ensign proved her an enemy, and she evidently distrusted us, as the black smoke came pouring from her funnels and the steady motion of her huge walking-beam showed that her officers had no idea of coming to. We tried our thirty-two-pounder, but it did not stop them, when we laid our seven hundred pound rifle, and gave her a shell. Luckily it did not explode, as it cut one of her funnels nearly off, and her decks were crowded with passengers. This brought her to, and on going on board she proved to be the Ariel steamship, bound for California. A number of United States officers were among her passengers, and quite a number of women and children.

We made sail for Jamaica, intending to land the prisoners and burn the vessel, but learned from the officers of an English barque that yellow fever was bad there.

Of course it would never do to go in with a lot of women and children, and while our captain was deliberating our engine broke down. Our prize could have left us without any trouble, so a party went on board the *Ariel*, took off her cylinder head, and thus disabled her.

The men behaved exceptionally well on this prize, all statements to the contrary notwithstanding, and were praised and complimented by the officers. When our engine was repaired we returned the cylinder head to the *Ariel*, and she was bonded and released.

We now had an acquaintance with a norther, a gale peculiar to these localities; and it blew cold as Blue Flugen, making us rummage out pea-jackets and heavy clothing, and, in fact, we had a miserable time of it. We hove to and drifted about, our screw helping us very little. We took a ship that was trying to beat against the gale, and we had a hard time getting aboard of her. We got plenty of bananas and cocoa-nuts, but very little else, and then burnt her. We stayed here expecting to catch a homeward bound steamer from the Pacific filled with treasure,

very pleasant to anticipate, but she did not come, and a few days before Christmas we came in sight of the Arcas Islands, and were soon joined by the Agrippina and her jolly Scotch captain.

The confounded steamer was getting as leaky as a sieve, and we plugged and caulked till I hated the sight of a serving-mallet. We overhauled rigging, and on Christmas Day went ashore, if shore it could be called, when you could dig a hole and go a-fishing anywhere. It was a miserable day, and ended in a fight, in which nearly the whole crew took a part, so that it required an armed guard from the ship to separate them. An extra spirit ration was the only indication of holiday. One of the officers remarked to "Cocky Bill," who came aboard terribly cut up, "that he made bad use of his liberty," and got the cheerful answer "that it was a poor 'art as never rejoices."

We lay at this beastly place until the new year, 1863, came in, and gladly left it, one of the men remarking truly, that we had been at many a funeral where there was more fun.

We now steered north, and in a few days

entered the Gulf of Mexico, and by the 10th of January were off the coast of Texas.¹

Late in the afternoon of the 11th we saw a steamer in the western board ; and she was announced as an enemy, and we went to quarters. She was making for us slowly, and was in plain sight two hours before coming within hail.

She looked like a Thames River steamer, and was a side-wheeler. It was getting dark

¹ It will be remembered that Captain Semmes had been informed of Banks's Expedition, and that he was laying his plans to interfere with it. The Expedition was expected to rendezvous at Galveston on the 10th of January, and the Alabama had been in hiding at the Arcas, undergoing repairs and making ready for special work. It was on the 5th of January that she left the island. Captain Semmes's plan, according to Captain Kell in his article in the *Century Magazine* (April, 1886), was to reach Galveston simultaneously with General Banks, and take the opportunity, when the troops were disembarking, to make a sudden attack upon the transports. "All attention at such a time would be given to the disembarkation of the army, as there were no enemy's cruisers to molest them ; our presence in the Gulf was not even known. We were to take the bearing of the fleet, and after the mid watch was set and all quieted down, silently approach, steam among them with both batteries in action, slowly steam through their midst, pouring in a continuous discharge of shell to fire and sink as we went, and before the convoys could move we expected to accomplish our work and be off on another cruise." It was while on this errand that the Alabama fell in with the Hatteras.

when she hailed "What ship 's that?"^a was answered, "This is Her Majesty's ship Petrel." I did not hear the return, but the word was given "Steady, men; fire!" and we let the Yankee have our entire starboard broadside. As we were not over one hundred yards away not a shot missed, and the effect was terrific. The men showed their training by yelling like pirates. The enemy turned our broadside, but shot high. We sponged, loaded, and rattled out our guns, and the marines and idlers used rifles and snipers' arms. Everybody ran hither and thither, and an old man-o'-war officer would have got out of his mind. At last the enemy fired a gun to the leeward and hailed: "We are sinking." The order was given to "Cease firing," and "Cutter and launch away."

Our prize was the United States steamer Hatteras, and was completely shot to pieces but had only lost two or three men. We had one wounded, and this at one hundred yards in fact, at one time I could have tossed a biscuit on board the enemy. The captured crew and officers had scarce reached the Alabama when their ship went down.

We made the captives as comfortable as

giving up most of the berth deck for accommodation. There must have been at least eighty of them, and we were soon good friends. We stowed ourselves away where we could, in the boats and on the main deck, and were in fact packed like herrings in a barrel.

We now learned that the Hatteras had no ferry-boat, and that her best gun was a thirty-pound rifle, so that our victory had cost us the gloss taken off it. There was something about it that was discreditable to us, and that was the false hail. No amount of argument can justify this to any sensible, experienced sailor. The plain truth is, that we lost most of our captures by deception, and I think it detracts greatly from the credit otherwise due our commander for his courage and seamanship.

VI.

We now made a straight course for Jamaica, chasing a barque half a day, which proved to be our old consort, the Agrippina. On January 22 we steamed into the fine harbor of Port Royal, and landed our prisoners. There were several English men-o'-war ships here.

Kingston is a beastly place, unhealthy, and hot as an oven until the sea-breeze blows towards night. The mosquitoes are more numerous and ferocious than anywhere else in the world, I think, and confounding the fire-flies with them, Jack declares that they carry port lights to find their victims. We were solemnly and impressively warned by the captain, "to observe that sense of decorum and propriety that befitted the character of British seamen engaged in a holy cause, combating for human rights trampled under foot by the base-born Northern hordes," etc., but it all fell on deaf ears, as the men were very dry, and longing to have a turnup with the "nigger police."

A party of us went into a clothing store to help a messmate buy a pea-jacket. A very fine one was shown by the Jew proprietor (all trade in Kingston is in the hands of these people, and nippers they are). The article was bought for the high price of £4 10s., and taken away to be wrapped up. When it was given to the purchaser he thought it wise to look at it, and it was something else. The cloth was like a fish net, and you could have chucked a bulldog through the threads without touching.

We at once proceeded to state our objections to the trade, with some very starchy comments thrown in. Now these London Jews are generally good pugilists, and not easily frightened, so we had quite a scrimmage, and Isaac and Jacob and Moses and Levi took a good hand in. But the rascal had better have returned the money, as, in order to give every one room, the counters were piled on top of one another, and the floor was covered a foot deep with gorgeous clothing, that was not improved by tramping over it. The police drove us out, and later in the day one of the men created a sensation by coming aboard very drunk, in a white vest, swallow tail blue coat, and a pair of gorgeous yellow and blue striped pants; spoils, no doubt, from the taking of Jerusalem.

I have spoken of the commonplace character of English sailors. Occasionally one turns up with a character all his own. We had such a man on board, nick-named "Shakes." He was a tall, bony, cadaverous fellow, that was by his own account afflicted with many ills, but he was specially given to "agies," and loved to shake and describe his sensations. He had a chest full of patent

medicines, and took a "caulker" every morning. He bothered the doctor until he forbade him to come near him. While we lay at Kingston, he was more grumpy than usual, and was very anxious to get "caster ile," so he persuaded a simple-minded Irish top-man named Riley to buy him a dose on shore, Shakes having lost his liberty for some offence.

Away from a vessel Riley was as simple as a child, and took all Shakes's growling and grunting in good faith. So, with the injunction to get a big dose of "caster ile," and "summat to take away the taste," the Irishman went ashore, and soon found himself in a pharmacy, resplendent with gilding and colored bottles.

He asked the little man behind the counter for a "big dose of cashter ile and something to lave the tahste aff it." The druggist waited on another customer, and then asked Riley, "would he take a glass of sangaree?" "I will, sor," said Riley. The sangaree was brought and drank, and in answer to the query, "Was it pleasant?" he answered, "Well, not to be uncivil, sor, it ain't; it's kind o' thick."

The pill-vender smiled, and Riley said, "Plase give me the ile, and I'll be goin." "Ha, ha, my dear man, you have taken it in the sangaree." "Hwat," the poor fellow gasped, "d' ye mane to go for to say that I've taken that bloody ile down my hatch-way? It was for another man. Niver a dose ye'll sell for the rest of yer life, for I'll murder ye," and he made a lick at the little man, who yelled for help. A party of us just came in to get cigars, and we held Riley, while, stuttering with fury, he told his story. The little man was as pale as a "biled duff," and offered to give him, the Irishman, an antidote. With a ferocious look Riley replied, "Antigoat! If ye thry any more thricks on me, I'll have yer life, ye bloody sawbone! My backbone's coming up." We got him out of the place, and he was really sick, and frightened. As soon as he got on the vessel he rushed below, and on "Shakes" asking for the oil, Riley yelled out, "Ye infernal malingerer!" and knocked the sick man into one of the lee-ports. The police interfered, and the story came out, and there was fun on the berth deck that day.¹

¹ Without wishing to throw discredit upon Mr. Haywood's

As an instance of the improvidence of English sailors, read the following: One of the men, drunk of course, bought of a negro woman a child about four years old, and gave her sixteen shillings for it. With the little nigger, which was as fat as a poodle, under his arm, and howling like a pirate, Fin started for the boat, the woman following, justly thinking it a sailor's prank. An officer was in charge of the launch, and sternly told the man to leave the child go; after much jaw and growling, he pulled off his jumper and wrapped his *protégé* in it, and left it on the beach yelling. Before we had pulled a dozen strokes away the woman had it, and did a very good piece of business, as in the pocket of the jumper was seven pounds that Fin had neglected to take out.

Had the Alabama taken the entire Yankee navy the residents of the place could not have been more extravagant in their laudation of the officers. All their houses were thrown open, and fêtes and dinner parties abounded.

narrative, we may raise the question whether this sailor's yarn, which has been spun in print before, did not originate somewhere else than on the Alabama.

All Jamaicans agree that emancipation has ruined the planters and not benefited the negro, and, of course, they naturally have a warm feeling for the representatives of a government that was fighting for the maintenance of slavery, and, like their Liverpool brethren, had no doubt but that the Republic must collapse, and they talked and blowed most absurdly. They little thought that all this enthusiasm would strengthen the counts in the indictment by which England was convicted, shamed, and dishonored, and condemned to pay £3,000,000 to the Yankees for the Alabama's cruise.

Mason did not go aboard with us. He was sick of the service and the men. I had stuck to him manfully, but he suffered much from the bullying of some of the crew, incited no doubt by the villainous old Scotchman. So I gave him five pounds, and took an order for his chest, which was not worth forty shillings. His desertion was a great loss to me, as I could always have a pleasant and intelligent conversation, which was impossible with the rest.

We also lost our paymaster, Yonge, who deserted here; so closely was the secret of

his offences kept that not even the servants of the officers' mess knew, or, if they did, were afraid to tell, but he was no doubt under arrest aft. Well, it was, I suppose, a good riddance, for he was beyond question a cur. A Southerner born and bred, he owed an allegiance to the flag that was not to be expected of the men of the crew.

Our stay at Kingston lasted five days, and was not productive of discipline on the ship. Several of the petty officers were disgraced, and worse men took their places. With such a crew as ours, it was impossible to find men that could do their duty as warrant officers, and command the respect of the men.¹

We now sailed south, coasting the Island

¹ Captain Semmes was much worn out when the *Alabama* reached Kingston, and turning the command over to her executive officer, Mr. Kell, took a rest in the hills at an Englishman's plantation. On his return to Kingston on the eve of leaving the port he found a scene of confusion. "The paymaster (Yonge) had been drunk ever since he landed, neglecting his duty, and behaving in a most disreputable manner. He was 'hail fellow well met' with all the common sailors, and seemed to have an especial fancy for the sailors of the enemy. Kell had suspended his functions, and had sent on shore and had him brought off under arrest. He had become partially sobered, and I at once ordered him to pack up his clothing and be off."—*Memoirs of Service Afloat*, pp. 558, 559.

of Hayti. I have never seen anything more beautiful than the mountains, palm-clad to the top, and waving feather-like in the breeze. We took three prizes between here and Jamaica, and as usual burnt them. We stopped at a miserable town on the west side, called San Domingo, and landed our prisoners.

We sailed out the Mona Passage, and were once more in the north Atlantic.

VII.

There was literally nothing to do now but stand the watches. We had made sword-mates and chafing-gear enough to last the British navy for a time, and turned Turk's-heads and Matthew Walker knots on everything that was available, except the captain's moustaches, and so were afflicted with the genteel complaint of ennui. Even fighting and slanging each other was monotonous, and we tried music. I got out my flute, and played the first part of "Away with Melancholy" (all I had managed to learn in three years' essay) about three hundred times, until my messmates declared if I did n't put up the infernal "toot" they would throw me overboard. I suppose it did get tiresome, and

one night, in a spirit of enterprise, I tried a wild kangaroo fantasia on it that nearly got me in irons. The fiddler was quite as bad, and he was silenced by some one pouring a pint of molasses into the *f* holes of the instrument, and, in a fit of rage, the musician broke it all to pieces over the head of the fellow who did it.

Strangely enough religious discussion took up much of our time, however incongruous it may appear. M'Gregor night after night rung the changes on his best bower text, "Whom God has predestinate, them also has He called," reading from a weather-beaten volume that might have cheered the heart of Habakkuk Muckle-wrath. As I watched the infernal old ruffian laying his huge hand on the knee of his listener, and warning him that "unless he believed those words he would never drink o' the waters o' life," I wondered at the perplexing and infinite variety of human natures.

We had another man in our watch who did not let the Scotchman monopolize religious instruction. Harris was no doubt a "little sprung in the tops," but he tried to do right, and but for his, I believe, unconscious

profanity would have passed muster ashore as a Christian. He read his Bible nightly, spelling the words with many revisions, and following the line with huge stumpy finger. In giving his experience on shore, he announced himself as a member of the church of the "Rolling Algerines." "The what?" I asked. "That's right, Bo, that's the name on it. They wears their har long, and eats the first fruits of the arth; I've got it down in a book." After much grubbing in his chest, he handed me a small book, entitled, "The Rules of Discipline of the Church of the 'Rowley Nazarines,' of Rowley, in Yorkshire," evidently one of the local sects so common in the north of England. "Yer satisfied, are ye? Yes, that's it, the Rolling Mazarines, them's them."

Then a discussion started as to what single act a man could do most likely to insure him salvation. One thought helping a woman or child in distress, another being good to "yer ole mother," and Flaherty, with true Irish indirectness, believed he had as good a show as anybody, "bekase he once killed a policeman," and most of the men agreed with him. Indeed the majority of them are childishly

ignorant, but let dangers come, appalling to a landsman, storm, fire, or wreck, and he unhesitatingly they will meet it.

We had of course a liar, a perfect Ana of a liar. All watches have some one of this kind, but our man was so impressive and circumstantial, that with a very little faith you would believe all he said. He once saw a shark caught off the Isle of Pines that he inside of it a whaleboat and two of a crew. These men had lit the boat lantern, and were playing checkers when discovered. The rest of the men, finding it rather close, had gone ashore.

Early in the cruise we had started a glee club, but they made a great deal of noise and very little music, let alone singing different songs at the same time. One advantage gave us. A fight was going on below with much swearing and noise, and an officer asking what was the matter, was satisfied when told that it was the glee club "practising." It's an ill wind that blows no one any good.

We had one good tenor voice, and that belonged to the "Wagabone." He was the son of a Shropshire gentleman, disowned for his vices, and was a base and irreclaimable

blackguard, like most disrated gentlemen. Indeed, so habitually vile was his talk, that even his messmates protested, and threatened to "maroon" him if he did n't try and be decent, at least once a week. But he sang charmingly, with taste and feeling, and after his singing, "My Helen is the Fairest Flower," and the fine and pathetic old sea song of the "Loss of the Lady Sherbrooke," many eyes were moist with tears, albeit not used to the melting mood.

The rule was that when a man was called on to sing, sing he must, or drink a breaker of salt water. I was excused after my first essay, for several reasons; the principal one was that I could n't turn a tune to save my life, and had no voice to do it with if I could, and I was advised never to try it save in the vicinity of a deaf and dumb asylum.

And it's a fact, with great sensibility to sweet sounds, I can't produce them any how, except on the "float."

Even old M'Gregor was knocked down for a song, and after much tacking to get the wind, he said "he wud sing none o' thae Godless songs, but sumthing that would turn our thoughts to other and better things."

In a voice like the creaking of a capstan,
he sang or growled : —

“ The roaring lion he did see,
And dragons lish and strang,
And the red women o’ Babylon
Did set wi’ them amang.

“ But Israel did his voice uplift,
And cried for help amain,
And a’ that did wi’ him contend
Are overthrown and slain.”

“ Well, that ’s enough of that, old man, by thunder. Three more verses of that sort o’ singing would bring the sharks under the counter: they’d think all hands were kicking the bucket.” And, indeed, it was awful, and the Scotchman in future was left out of our service of song.

Like “ Moses and Sons,” we kept a poet, and although his versification was rather hitchy, still it never lost its popularity so long as we were on the ship. The poet had been a tailor on shore, and but for his love of drink and fighting would have done well, as he was a shrewd fellow and a good workman. His first draught from the spring of Helicon was as follows, and, in the language of the music halls, was sung with great applause : —

" Oh, when from Bet I parted,
Away in Mofra's Bay,
Like a bloomin' fool I left her
A ticket for my pay.
Says she, when goin' o'er the side,
' Whichever course ye steer,
I hopes ye 'll make big prize money
In this jolly privateer.'

CHORUS : " Oh, our jolly privateer
Has left old England's shore,
Lord send us lots o' prizes,
But no Yankee man-o'-war."

The chanter song of the Alabama was as follows (first verse) : —

" Across the Western ocean,
The home of the storm and wind,
We go to meet the foeman,
And leave our native land behind.
At our mizzen flies the Stars and Bars,
And it ever our boast will be,
That we doused the Yankee Stripes and Stars,
And drove it from the sea."

The fight with the Hatteras was made the subject of a poem almost as long as a "top burton," and I can only recall the first two verses : —

" Now evening from the western sky
Had chased the red sun down,
And the far-off Cuby mountains
With golden light did crown,
When from the mast-head comes the hail,
' A vessel on our lee,'

And the flag that flies at her spanker head
Proclaims an enimee.

“The drum beats fast to quarters,
Each man stands by his gun,
And soon we know these Yankees bold
Must either fight or run.
But Yankee tars are brave and true,
And can't be beat, they say,
And sure we know we 're come to fight,
And mean to win the day.”

“Go to, my masters, the Bellman writes better lines.” But rugged as they were, they were sung to the tune of “When off the Scilly Rocks,” with an enthusiasm and energy that fairly started the deck beams. Everything was “married to immortal verse:” the “captain's mustaches,” the “first luff's long legs,” and “the four hairs a side on the midshipman's upper lip,” which he was forever fondling. Nor did they spare themselves. For in “Captain Semmes's Laments:” —

“The cappen stood on the quarter deck
Surveyin' of the crew,
And says he to daddy long legs,
What 'n thunder *will* we do?
For sure it 's true it 'll never do
Across the seas to sail,
For sure am I that this 'ere crew
Is just out o' Liverpool jail.”

As may be expected, the greater part of

the songs were of a character that suited the atmosphere of the berth deck, and were unmentionable to ears polite.

Our food was varied and excellent, and the sailor's *bonne bouche*, plum duff, was no novelty. Where Englishmen are, there will practical joking abound, and infamously mean and cruel many of these jokes were.

Some of the larboard watch played one on us that was by no means a good investment for them. With the connivance, no doubt, of the cook's mate, one Sunday they managed to insert a thirty-two pound shot into our duff; as might be imagined its weight surprised the mess caterer, and he spoke of its being "infernal solid;" but when he tried to cut it open, his wonder grew; a little scraping revealed the shot. Stiff with indignation Bally fired the desecrated duff out of the port, and walking over to the larboard side, well forward, he let the shot go with all the force of his particularly strong arm.

Mess tins, kiddies, and pork and beans flew in all directions, and it was a wonder that no one lost his legs by the missile. A rush was made for the offender, and a lively time was had, as the entire starboard watch took a hand in it.

On another occasion a stalwart messman accused the cook of partiality in "sizing the duffs," and gave emphasis to his protest by using his pudding in the bag like a slung-shot, and nearly drove the poor doctor through the engine-room bulkheads. Of course, others took his part, and pudding flew around lively, and when we asked our messmate about our "duff," he answered, "that most of it was in Pokey Harris's ear."

After a week's idleness and a smart chase we came up with a vessel that proved to be an American, the *Golden Eagle*, and in a few hours overhauled another, the *Jane Oliver*, both whalers; they made a big blaze.

March 11, we chased a vessel that would not come to until fired on, but which proved to be a Portuguese. The captain was so scared that he could not talk, and thought we were pirates, "a most absurd assumption."

We had very bad weather now, and our vessel strained and creaked like an old collier. I was thrown against a gun in the heave and toss, and nearly had my ribs stove in. Several more prizes were taken, and two bonded, as their cargoes belonged to English consigners. On one vessel the men got liquor

and refused to leave, and it took a strong crew from the Alabama to settle them, as we had to use our cutlasses.


March 30, crossed equator. We had now taken over forty prizes and destroyed a vast amount of property, and where were the Yankee men-o'-war? Having a good time looking for the pirate Alabama, no doubt. Certainly, the South was well served by her little navy. We captured a brig full of coal, and after some dreadfully bad weather got our prize into the harbor of Fernando de Noronha, a rock in mid-ocean, and inhabited by Portuguese. We had a deal of trouble coaling from the brig, and it was as hot as Bengal. This was dangerous holding ground, and we nearly lost two of our anchors.

We succeeded in taking four whalers. Several of the captains had their families aboard, and the ward-rooms were vocal with the bawling of the babies. Sending our captives ashore, and making provision for their support, we left this horrid hole. Life in a light-ship off Cape Horn could be no worse than living in such a place. We now sailed for South America, and anchored in the Brazilian port of Bahia May 10, and found there a Confederate vessel, the Georgia.

Captain Semmes begged the men "to remember the glories they had won, and behave like British seamen," and, according to my experience, they did. Making a rush on the port guard, they had their muskets in a twinkling, and mounting the yellow, shaky looking officer on the shoulders of a brawny topman, they run him all over town, doing him, however, no other harm. The governor ordered the Alabama to leave the port at once, and denounced the crew as a disgrace to a civilized nation. Captain Semmes was an excellent diplomatist, but he failed to make friends with the officials here, and his permission to the authorities, to put the disorderlies in irons, was a "Greek bearing gifts," as the men would have taken the town if attacked by the troops.

The only reason the crew chose to give for these pranks was that which the Cumberland blacksmith gave for whipping the parson, "that he wanted to, and knew he could." The petty officers, with few exceptions, were as bad as the men.

A few days after leaving Bahia we took two prizes ; the usual disposition was made of them, and next we hailed an English barque, that agreed to take our prisoners.



The ship *Talisman* and three whaling brigs were next captured, and then the barque *Conrad*, laden with wool. This vessel was fitted up as a privateer, and called the *Tuscaloosa*, and a twenty-pound rifle-gun, taken on the steamer *Ariel*, mounted on the quarter deck. I had a chance to go aboard of her as warrant officer, but declined. Lieutenant Maffit took command, and we parted with cheers.¹

From here to the Cape we took but one prize, a guano ship, and the last day of July, 1863, we anchored in Saldanha Bay, on the east coast of Africa, north of Cape Town. Here we were busy caulking and refitting,

¹ "The *Conrad* being a tidy little barque, of about three hundred and fifty tons, with good sailing qualities, I resolved to commission her as a cruiser. Three or four officers, and ten or a dozen men, would be a sufficient crew for her, and this small number I could spare from the *Alabama*, without putting myself to material inconvenience. Never, perhaps, was a ship of war fitted out so promptly before. The *Conrad* was a commissioned ship, with armament, crew, and provisions on board, flying her pennant, and with sailing orders signed, sealed, and delivered, before sunset on the day of her capture. I sent Acting-Lieutenant Low on board to command her, and gave him Midshipman George T. Sinclair, as his first lieutenant, and promoted a couple of active and intelligent young seamen, as master's-mates, to serve with Mr. Sinclair as watch officers." — *Memoirs of Service Afloat*, p. 627.

painting ship, and overhauling spars and rigging. We should, in fact, have gone into dock, as our bottom needed looking after.

The country around was very barren and desolate looking, but the Dutch farmers appeared to be very comfortable. Few spoke English. The women are tremendously broad and stout, and as ugly as if bespoke. Here one of the engineers shot himself by accident, and was buried in a little grave-yard surrounded by gray, bare hills. No doubt the poor fellow would rest as well as in some far away English church-yard, under the elms, but it adds another terror to death to think of being left to sleep in a spot so desolate in a strange land.

We left this place August 8, and just off Cape Town captured a fine American barque, the *Sea Bride*. What she was doing there no one could make out, as it was known that we were only a few miles away. If the officers had had the least grit, they might have got within shore jurisdiction by risking a shot.¹

¹ Captain Semmes states that the wind was light and the barque making little headway, or she could have run within the marine league.

In fact, I believe she was within three leagues of land; but the English officials were outrageously partial; and I overheard the American consul, a Mr. Graham, say, "that beyond unmeaning courtesies he had no chance for fair play against the rebel sympathies of the English government representatives."

The whole town came aboard, and paid the officers so many compliments that they fairly got out of the way. The editor of the "Cape Argus"¹ was especially florid and loud in commendation of everything aboard. One of his party was a veritable "Sairy Gamp" in appearance, and no doubt his "mother-in-law." This old lady asked many questions of the men, amongst others, "What did we do with our captives?"

This was addressed to Roddy, a real cannibal-looking sailor, with huge black whiskers and teeth like an ogre. "Well, mum, I'll tell ye. I don't propoge to stay on the wessel long, on account o' sich doin's," and here

¹ Captain Semmes in his *Memoirs of Service Afloat* gives a long extract from the *Argus* descriptive of the arrival of the *Alabama*, which sustains the editor's reputation as a florid writer.

he lowered his voice. "We biles 'em, mum. We tried a roast, but there ain't a hounce o' meat on one o' them Yankee carkagis. Yes, mum, we biles 'em." The old lady's chin dropped away, and gasping out "Good Lordy," she hunted up her escort, the editor, and quickly left the ship.

We had visitors occasionally that were by no means as friendly as the editor of the "Cape Argus." One old lady, with a face like a codling apple and jet-black eyes, told me that she had a daughter and two sons in the United States, "and both my sons, sir, are in the Union army, fighting for freedom and against the slave-holders. Have you a mother?" I told her I had. "Well, I hope you'll see her safe and well; but you'll excuse me speaking my mind, and I don't think any Englishmen should be in this service." I treated the good old soul kindly, and she asked me to come and see her, but I never did.

VIII.

Cape Town is an epitome of the world at large. Every race under the sun is represented there, I believe, even Gayhead Indians. Malaysans, Parsees, Coolies, Chinese, and Lascars,

Not to mention Kaffirs, Germans, and Frenchmen, jostle you on the streets. The Dutchmen, the original inhabitants, are big solid men, hating the English with a steady "brother-in-law hatred." I have found that wherever the English rule a subject race they do it justly and well, but they do not win their love and respect. Your Englishman is by nature arrogant and overbearing in manner, and if he does a favor for one that he is not afraid of, he generally accompanies it with a kick, and is appreciated accordingly.

This roadstead is deadly to shipping, and in no place in the world are there so many fatal wrecks. Insurance companies must execrate it. If you ask an old resident why they chose this blustering, wind-swept beach, instead of Simon's Bay, where the anchorage is good, his answer is generally, "Because they chose to, and it was no one else's business." A real, good, solid, British reason. We had a bad storm, and Table Mountain, which is a first-rate barometer, was almost out of sight in the driving sleet and mist. Two barques were wrecked and dashed to pieces, and we had to get up steam and make way around to Simon's Bay under close reefs and

storm-sails. Simon's Bay is open to the south and is comparatively safe, although on this coast the winds are very capricious, and you are only sure of one thing, and that is, from whatever quarter it comes it will blow hard.

I had a couple of reminders here that everybody did not think as much of us as the English officials. One of the larboard watch was known as "Buster." He was a big, broad-shouldered fellow, and had quite a reputation as a fighting-man. He was always telling of the "professionals" that he had whipped at home, and as he had been victor in several turn ups on board, why, we believed him.

He and I were ashore, walking on the little pier, when we saw a man coming fast towards us. He was short, but very stout and stocky; he did n't cut any time to waste in letting us know his intentions, for he at once cursed us as a couple of sneaking pirates, and declared that he could lick us both, and what was more, was "agwine" to do it. His pronunciation at once discovered his nationality. He was a Yankee from the ground up.

"Buster," with a lordly wave of the hand,

told the fellow "to go away or he'd get hurt;" remarking "that's what I'm here for," he gave Buster a whack amidships that completely knocked all the wind and fight out of him; in fact, in about thirty seconds my fighting shipmate — "the pride of the larboard watch" — was n't worth gun wadding.

Then the gentleman turned to me. Now I was very active and stout, and was a first-rate sparrer, but I did n't like the looks of the fellow. He was built like the pier head, and would evidently take a deal of pounding; but there were plenty of lookers on, and it would never do to show the white feather. I got behind an old carronade that did duty as a snubbing-post, and put up my hands. He rushed at me like a mad bull, and got a couple of facers, that only seemed to make him madder. I hit him, I am sure, five times to his one, but I knew that if any of his straight whacks took effect it would land me over the hills into Cape Town. I saw the police coming, and redoubled my efforts; so did the Yankee. Bless the man that planted that post there, but for that, I should have been principal at a funeral next day.

At last, one big Dutchman, that must have

weighed twenty stone, and wore a red coat, threw himself bodily on the Yankee like a gigantic lobster. Thank the Lord it was over, and my antagonist was man-hadled to the police station by half a dozen men, kicking and evidently not half satisfied.

As for me I was more than satisfied. I had two beautifully black eyes, and was as sore as if I had been keelhauled.

I sneaked about until the last boat, when I went aboard. All would have gone well but for Buster. He had lied and blowed so about it that suspicion was aroused, and the truth came out. Buster was condemned to drink a quart of salt water and lose his grog ration for a week, and was denounced as a wind-bag and a discredit to the ship.

My case was deliberately sat upon by my watch mates, and the result stated in these words by the orator of the occasion: "Ye made a wery tidy fight of it, matey, but if it had n't been for that ere post, it's my 'pinion that we'd 'a been handin ye over the side in yer hammock with a stitch through yer 'and-some nose; but what we don't like is yer letting the bloody polis' take that Yankee; ye had oughter sailed in and got him away,


and the least ye can do is to go ashore and have it out, and we 'll keep off the polis', and find ye a post, beside."

I told the spokesman to go to Erebus, and moreover declared that I believed the Yankee could whip any man on board. This was scouted at as outside of the record, and I was solemnly fined thirty shillings for the benefit of the court. We afterwards found out that the man was n't a Yankee at all, but a Dane, and carpenter on the Sea Bride, our late prize. Well, he was a good one, anyhow, and, like Handy Andy, "the next time I meet him I 'll keep out of his way."

There was a little church at Cape Town, back from the beach, and standing in the shadow of the foot-hills that lay at the base of the mountain. Like everything else here, it looked weather-beaten and old. Here on Sunday morning I attended service. An old man at the door, who was evidently a man-o'-war boatswain or quarter-master retired, told me that they were Primitive Methodists, and that to-day (August 11) all over the world those of their belief would pray to God to support the cause of liberty and right in America. I of course knew without asking, for without

exception the Englishmen that championed the cause of the South were the gentry and the commercial class. The workingmen had no sympathy with it.

I had "C. S. S. Alabama" around my muffin cap, and the fellow said, "Go in, my lad; it will do you good to hear the truth." So in I went and sat down. The congregation were all English, apparently mechanics, small tradesmen, and a few artillery soldiers. The preacher came in, a tall, spare man, with abundant white hair, and large black eyes, full of fire and expression. A hymn was sung, and then from the tall pulpit he gave out his text. It was from Genesis: "Joseph was like unto a fruitful vine running over a wall, and the archers had wounded him sorely, but God would strengthen his bow, and make strong his arm, and his enemies should not prevail against him." Then he raised his right arm, and in a voice of fire said: "Wherever our people are gathered together on this blessed Sabbath, in whatever part of the world they may be, their prayers will go up for the cause of eternal justice and right. England's glory and her power are in her equal laws, her justice, and her freedom; and our brothers,



one of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, are fighting for these on the other side of the lobe, against the men who are seeking to perpetuate the dreadful doctrine of human slavery. Trumpet never sounded in a cause more glorious than that the Northern men are upholding; let us strengthen their arms with prayer that they may not falter. Is not this pirate ship, the Alabama, that is lying in our port, a true and fitting representative of the man-hunting, slave-trading republic? 'The Ishmael of the seas,' destroying the peaceful unarmed trader, but fleeing like a thief from the man-o'-war." His language was plain and unstudied, and his words came like a roll from a gun, so impressive and earnest as his manner, and his congregation showed their appreciation by a deep hum. Hiding my cap under my jacket I stole out, and as my liberty was for two days, and would be at the next day, I got a ride for five shillings in a Boer's wagon back to Simon's Bay. The old preacher's sermon had no effect on me morally, but I was much impressed by it nevertheless, and I had no doubt but that his prayers would be answered, for I was too intelligent not to know something of the re-

sources of the North, and I believe with Bonaparte, that Providence is on the side of the heaviest battalions.

The British officers were very cordial with our officers, and dined and wineed them to perfection, but they got very tired of the crew. Cape brandy is a vile liquor and very cheap, and its use drove many of the men crazy. Fifteen of the crew deserted at once, and when a guard attempted to take them, they fought like bull-dogs, and nearly knocked our Dutch master's-mate's brains out. All the petty officers save the boatswain were disrated. The fact of it was this : if you got drunk, the officers looked upon you as a ruffian, and if you did n't, they suspected that you kept sober to make mischief. I knew that I did not stand well with some of the officers for this reason, but I was perfectly indifferent to their good opinion, and took means to let them know it.

In spite of guards and inspection liquor was brought on board, and the men below fought and defied the wretched master-at-arms and ship's corporal. In fact, no officer could come below after dark, unless with a strong guard, as marlin-spikes, balls of spun-yarn, etc., would

fly in all directions, so that we were left pretty much to ourselves, and made a police of our own; and after giving a quarrelsome roisterer a certain amount of law, we knocked him silly without any hesitation. But it was dreadful, and a man had to be as tough as a backstay to endure it and live.

Just outside of the harbor we took a Yankee whaler, but he proved to be inside the shore limit and was released. Certainly, in no part of the world could the Flying Dutchman have found such congenial cruising-ground. It blows all ways at once, and with fogs so dense that, in sailor phrase, "they plug up the hawse-holes."

Some of the worst of the men were sent out of the ship, thus making a fine example to the rest. We ran up the coast to Angra Pequena Bay, and got in water, and returned to Simon's Bay and took in coal.

IX.

We left this dreary place September 24, and had a parting blessing in a dreadful storm. I had been around the Cape before sailing in the Alabama, and had seen bad weather, but this was something extra. We

were actually running in a deep valley, between hills of dark green water, and striking a huge cross-wave that would bury our bows, bringing the vessel to with a shock that made her vibrate in every timber. Indeed, up to the middle of October we had nothing but bad weather.

We were steering for the Straits of Sunda, but saw no American vessels until the early part of November, when we took a prize, despite her name, — the ship *Winged Racer*, — and another vessel that gave us a good chase, and, had there been a good breeze, would have outsailed us.¹

¹ This was the clipper *Contest*, bound for New York from Yokohama, and Captain Semmes gives a page to the chase. A writer in *The Argonaut* of San Francisco, April 3, 1886, gives an animated account of the escape about this time of his clipper ship the *Asteroid*. She was chased by the *Alabama* in heavy weather all day, and occasionally fired upon. When the steamer was abeam "she closed up with us," the writer says, "as near as safety would permit, and, hailing us, asked where we were bound, and demanded the surrender of the ship to the Confederate government. I answered through my trumpet, 'Come and take me.' Conversation being too straining for the lungs amid the howling of the wind and rolling of the huge billows, and the proximity of the vessels too dangerous, we separated a little, and had recourse to blackboards to carry on our conversation. Semmes asked where we were bound. I answered, without a blush, 'Melbourne,' thinking that possibly he might try to intercept me if

In stress of something to do, all hands took to tattooing. We had three expert operators on board, and they were kept busy. One man had a snake picked around his body from the waist up to the neck, the head, with open mouth and fangs displayed, showing on the breast. It was exceedingly well done, and the fellow came near having erysipelas from the irritation caused by the wounding of the

he knew I was to pass through the Straits of Sunda. Then he had the cheek to order me to 'haul down your flag and surrender, escape or no escape' — on a kind of parole, I suppose he meant. I wrote on the board: 'First capture, then parole.' This answer vexed him, I am sure, for he immediately wrote: 'Surrender, or I will sink you.' I wrote: 'That would be murder, not battle.' 'Call it what you will, I will do it,' he wrote. 'Attempt it, and by the living God I will run you down, and we will sink together,' I wrote in reply. I knew his threat was vain, for in that heavy sea, rolling his rails under, he did not dare to free his guns, which were already double lashed. They would have carried away their tackles and gone through the bulwarks overboard. Conscious that he had made empty threats, he said no more, but doggedly kept on our course. Sail was still further reduced on both vessels, as the wind kept increasing and was now blowing a gale. We were now gradually and surely drawing ahead of the steamer. It was now growing dark. Rejoicing at my fortunate escape, I gave the valiant Semmes a parting shot by hoisting the signal 'Good-by.' Dipping the Star-Spangled Banner as a salute, I hauled it down, and the steamer was soon lost to sight in the darkness. . . . I never saw her after our escape, but, indirectly, she forced me to sell my ship in China soon after."

skin. Full rigged ships, Goddesses of Liberty, and foul anchors were common enough, but one sailor hit on a novelty. He had a very long nose, and tattooed a red and blue streak from between his eyebrows to the point of his "smeller." It was generally admitted that, as he was the ugliest man alive, anything would be an improvement to his mug. His ambition, he acknowledged, was to go home looking like a "bloomin' Feejee," and indeed he succeeded.

We had but few books that would interest the men, but nothing gave more satisfaction than an account of "Jack and the Bean-Stalk," found in one of the chests. I read it and re-read it aloud.

It was an amusing sight: fifteen or twenty big, broad-shouldered fellows, their faces bronzed and weather-beaten, sitting in a circle, pipe in mouth, listening with breathless attention to this time-honored baby-story.

When Jack came out of the copper to do execution on the giant they got excited, — strong arms were lifted, and big hands clenched, — and they broke out into shouts: "Go in, little un!" "Weather him!" "Stave in his gun-room!" The liar of the ship aided

the effect materially by declaring that he knew Jack well, and lived near him in Warwickshire.

This man's imagination was wonderful, and his description of the death of Nelson was listened to with deep attention. And he told his sensations when he saw the Admiral fall. Wiping his eyes, and in a voice broken with emotion, he declared that the dying hero's last words were addressed to him. "Tom, don't let these ere bloody Roosians (*sic*) get the weather-gauge on us."

One of our men, an arrant cockney, was stage-struck. He had been a super in the "Wyictoria Theatre," and could recite whole pages from the transportation dramas. It was determined to give him a chance on a regular stage. A grating was rigged on blocks, and a spare sail made a background; and on this one of our funny men drew a skull and cross-bones, and other more objectionable cartoons, with gun varnish. That spoiled the sail, and gave the boatswain a fine chance to express his opinion of the men between decks. As I had been spokesman for them, I, of course, got the brunt of it. One of the men, however, did not take it so

quietly as I did ; and old Mac grew white with anger when told that "he need not put on quarter-deck airs," as "he had better have stayed in Jamaica and helped the nigger wife he left there to keep the flies off his duff-colored hinfant." This was considered rather smart, with the usual anti-climax of a row and irons for one.

A couple of American flags were cribbed out of the armorer's room and cut up into dresses, and the smooth-faced young fellow that was to take the part of the heroine in the "Burglar of Bagdad" was provided with a voluminous wig, with "bangs" to match, made out of shakings, piebald blond in color.

"Supe" was in a state of tremendous excitement, and as he was as pugnacious as a bull-terrier it was dangerous to go near him.

At four bells, Sunday afternoon, "Tom Tom the Tartar" appeared on the stage, every inch a "Burglar of Bagdad." "Eluthina Imogene" did not show to so good advantage, the "shakings" getting into her eyes and causing her to use strong language. She was broad in build, and took a great deal of room to turn in, which, as the stage was small, was a disadvantage.

Striking an appropriate attitude, "Tom Tom," with a pronounced Bermondsey accent, spoke thus: "Ho, Heluthina Himogen, dost thou not see the galorious sun arisin' hin the heastern hocean, my bleedin' art his 'istin' with hemotion." Here he made a grab for Eluthina, and got a timber hitch in her wig, pulling it over her eyes, and was called a "bloomin' 'orkurd lubber." With an eye in "fine frenzy rolling," Tom Tom knocked his lady love off the grating, and "*exeunt omnes*." With a shout of laughter, all hands rushed for the stage. Eluthina ran for her life, her star-spangled robes in tatters, while "Supe" squared himself, and with a volley of oaths told them "to come on." In a minute he was caught up and suspended by the seat of his substantial canvas trousers on a hammock hook, where he hung kicking and defiant. He was mad with rage, and when I helped him down I was rewarded with a bang that laid me flat on the deck. The play was pronounced a great success, but no persuasion would make the performers repeat it.

We were now past the Straits of Sunda, and through Bilton Straits into the China Sea, and anchored off an island, pulling out

over one hundred fathoms of chain cable. The swell was tremendous, and we had to keep our screw working to hold our ground. This was early in December. We now sailed for Singapore and the Malacca Straits. Prizes were getting scarce, and it was very evident that our presence in these seas was known.

We came in sight of an island, wooded to the water's edge, green and luxuriant with foliage. On going on shore we found a French colony had recently taken possession for a convict station. A few prisoners were cutting wood and clearing up. They were a villainous looking set. Any one that has ever been at Toulon and seen the Forcats there will recall their wonderful similarity in looks: the same low brows and deep sunken eyes, with stealthy, side-long look, like that of a hunted animal. These miserable men looked half starved and begged "Tabac," but we were warned off by their guards.

The island was alive with huge baboons, and we were told not to meddle with them, as they were very savage and powerful. This was enough. After a short chase I got a young lady by the "pull back," and for my pains got a whack alongside the head, that made *me see stars*.

I had on a jumper made of strong duck, and monkey-seamed at that, but with one clutch she tore it, and the back of my shirt, clean away. The other men pitched in, and I am bound to say that the islanders had the best of it, several of their assailants being bitten; poor "Castor Ile" was nearly stripped of his clothes, and an attempt to beg or borrow a pair of trousers had no better result than the offer of a gridiron from a good-natured Frenchman, who supposed we wanted to cook some "feesh." Of course, we took it all in good part, but we let the confounded monkeys alone after this.

From the constant tinkering and repairs made to our engines and steam-pipes, it was evident that we would have to go into port somewhere, and have a general overhauling, if we wanted to do effective work on the ocean. It mattered little here, as the Yankee flag seemed to have left the eastern seas. We learned from the captain of an English barque that very many American ships were dismantled and laid up in Singapore, and that these often had taken out English papers and were sailed under the English flag.

The Alabama was designed to harass the

commerce of the United States, and she certainly succeeded. Of low fighting capacity, and to my mind of no great speed, in less than a year and a half she had practically driven the Yankee mariner from the ocean, and the only enemy of all the large fleet of war vessels manned and sailed by the American Government that we had come across was a tinclad old ferry-boat that was sent to the bottom in fifteen minutes, and we had to hunt *her* up. Had the cause of the South been so successfully championed on land as on sea, I might be writing these lines in the capital of a southern confederacy, as a constituent of his honor President Davis.

Now, I don't want to disparage the navy of the North. There are no better sailors than the Yankees, and the only real fighting that has been done with ships since Trafalgar and the Nile was at New Orleans and Mobile, and certainly Farragut was the equal of any sea-commander that ever lived; but I can see no excuse for letting us get out of the Gulf of Mexico as we did, and our escape at Martinique was simply due to a want of judgment and seamanship on the part of the commander of the San Jacinto, despite our having

the hearty aid and coöperation of the French naval officers and the port officials. But all this redounds to the credit of the captain and officers of the *Alabama*, that, with such a vessel and such a crew, so much was accomplished.

Cruising, now, was pleasant enough; we had a fair top-sail breeze most of the time, and need seldom touch a brace; and the boatswain's long cry, "All hands ahoy to take in sail," so often called in the stormy west, was seldom heard.

We were now in the middle of December, 1863, and we took two prizes, both ships that had British registers; but with a want of shrewdness not characteristic of the Yankee skippers, they had in one case forgotten to paint out the old name on the stern, and in the other the papers were so bunglingly drawn as to be useless to save the ship, and both made the customary bonfires.

After stopping to make repairs at a small island, we sailed for Singapore, in the Straits of Malacca, and got there the 24th of December.

The harbor was full of American vessels, dismantled and forlorn, and American cap-

tains were lounging about with their hands thrust deep in their trousers' pockets, looking anything but happy, and small blame to them; for a ship laid up in a foreign port, especially in these latitudes, is a terrible elephant to her owners, and requires constant care and expense to keep her from going to pieces.

After taking some fifty-five vessels and destroying the greater part of them, inflicting incredible loss on private individuals, what good had we done for the Southern Confederacy? When I look back at the incidents inevitable to the service, I am not at all proud of my share in it. Take, for instance, our boarding a prize: the captain is least to be pitied. He has money and credit wherever we may leave him, but his men are forlorn indeed; their poor stock of clothes has gone up in the flames, and they are cast adrift in a strange land penniless, — and this is legitimate. No wonder the regular service looked upon privateers as pirates, and the cry was "give them the stern." Supposing Captain Semmes had not been the resolute, upright gentleman he was, with such a crew of desperadoes, one can imagine how our captives might have fared.

x.

I visited Singapore in 1859, and had a friend in one of the great English commercial houses, that had been a shipmate of my father's. He was more surprised than pleased when I told him that I was on board the *Alabama*, for he was a fierce and uncompromising champion of the North, and we had many stiff arguments over the matter. I remember he predicted that England would be called on to pay for the mischief done by our vessel, — and very justly, he thought. I dined with him several times, and had a very pleasant time.

This is destined to be the great commercial city of the East, I think. Its trade is enormous, and is growing. The English and Chinese merchants control the most of it, but the "Tokees" are gradually but surely supplanting the others. They have a wonderful aptness for business and for managing great combinations; are more than commercially honest, patient, untiring, and thrifty, and deserve to succeed, for they do more good with their money than their European competitors.

Some years ago the English ruled trade

here and in China with a strong hand, and were grasping, arrogant, and tyrannical. If opposed, they at once called on their fleet and bore down all opposition. But these good times have passed away, — trade is open now, — and it is a question whether the English merchants could hold their own even against the Germans, who are very enterprising, and appear to have unlimited capital.

Success to them! No stranger, English or otherwise, that has visited these little bush trade-communities, can wish them well, for the members are snobbish and insolent, and are heartily disliked by the natives. Of all castes, that of wealth and race is the most odious, and any one that has been in India will remember the exclusiveness and hauteur of the English official and planting class.

The English and American merchants live in princely style. Fine houses, surrounded by gardens, indicate their part of the town, while the native quarter is dreadfully close and dirty.

The climate is very hot and enervating, and is only fit to live in during the northeast monsoon. Vegetation is wonderful in growth,

and masonry can only be kept intact by constant care, plants getting into the crevices and growing so strongly that the stones are soon dislodged.

The Chinese shops are very fine, and you can buy anything from a needle to an anchor; their "curios" are in bewildering variety, and sold at reasonable prices.

Our officers were not treated with the exuberant hospitality they had received in other ports, and in fact rather got the cold shoulder. No doubt our presence in these parts had seriously interfered with trade, and more than this, late news from America was very unfavorable to our government, and Johnny Bull thought it wise to hedge his sentiments, and not expend his aid and sympathy on a busted nationality.

But no doubt the confounded lawlessness of the crew provoked anger and contempt, and the "Free Press" had some very starchy comments on the ruffians that represented the Confederacy. Liquor is very cheap here, and bad beyond description, "Samshu," or "Chinese Bean Brandy," being the sailors' usual tippie. Its use drives Europeans clean mad, and produces a kind of delirium tremens

that is hard to cure, and you can get a quart of it for about threepence.

We coaled from lighters, as we lay about a mile from the town. The harbor was alive with Chinese and Japanese junks, *Anglice* "kickups," Malay proas, Java boats, and canoes with outriggers, that are able to ride in any sea.

We lay here a few days, and left just in time to prevent a wholesale desertion of the men,—at least fifty had made up their minds to run for it. As they were paid monthly it was no great hardship, there being no arrears of pay due them, and the prize-money was too far off and too uncertain to be an inducement to remain. In truth, it was insufferably tedious, and, short of deserting, I was ready to do anything to end the cruise.

About this time all hands took to dreaming and prophesying. The Finlander, Jack-o'-Lantern, was the interpreter, as he had a dream-book, printed in mysterious gutturals, which materially aided their effect; and when seven men at one time saw a "white goney" (no man ever saw a black one) in their hammock visions, it was generally admitted that something would happen (a very reasonable

conclusion in our case); and an old Manxman gave it as his opinion that inside of a "fort-nut" the flat fishes would be "dubbing their noses agin the carkidge of every blessed lubber on board." Now, from time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary, Manxmen have been held by seamen to have peculiar and intimate relations with the father of lies, and for the very excellent reason, that it is well known to every one that has any sense, that the Manx cats have no tails. This is not very conclusive, certainly, but have I not seen very intelligent people communicate with the other world by three knocks and a knuckle joint on a pine table? So Jack's argument is as good as his betters'.

Old M'Gregor was moved to wrath at the irreligious character of the whole proceeding. He proved, with his Bible open before him, that it was the "inspeeration of the deevil," and quoted the command, "that no witch should live," and intimated that our only safety was to throw "Jack-o'-Lantern" and "Old Christian" overboard; but the latter cursed the Scotchman as a blasted old pirate, and declared that it did n't need a "profit" to tell his fate. He would n't be drowned, and he might log it down as true.

We were not out more than two hours when we took a barque, and on the 26th of December captured two more, and burned them all. On the afternoon of the 27th, about eight bells, our lookout hailed "Ship ahoy!" and we saw in a few minutes from the deck the top-masts of a large ship. She had the wind abaft, and her flag, which was unusually large, was standing out flat as a board, showing the broad Stripes and bright Stars of the American ensign. We were off the northern point of Sumatra, and fairly out of the lee of the land, and the wind was blowing from the northeast. We were on the starboard tack and the other on the port, and we had the weather-gauge. We went about, and with the American flag flying went straight for the chase. But the Yankee was evidently tiled, and changing her course so as to bring the wind abeam and on the starboard, made her course due west. She was about five miles away, and was evidently a clipper.

She was splendidly handled, and it made our old square-rigged sailors stamp with approval to see how quickly she sheeted home her canvas. Out went her weather studding-sails up to royals. Now, these last are trouble-

some to handle, with a deal of gear and overhaul; but it was evidently no trouble to the Yankees, for in about five minutes their ship was a pile of canvas from gunwale to truck.

For a time our old barque, with all sail set that would draw, seemed to gain, and when we were about four miles off the order was given to "clear away" the pivot-gun. I was captain, and the commands came, "Sponge!" "Load shot!" "Ram her home!" "Give her full elevation!" Now, I was sure we were out of range, and was as good a gunner as was on board; but I determined to help the brave Yankee a little if I could, so I gave her a turn less, and then came "Fire!" Bang! the solid shot flew, cutting the crest of the waves three thousand yards away, and buried itself fully five hundred yards from the stern of the clipper.

She was fairly flying now, and the breeze was freshening, and her lee rail must have been almost awash.

Sighting along the gun, I could see that she was leaving us. Again we loaded with solid shot, and again I was ordered, "Full elevation!" but I let her alone, after fumbling about the screw. It was a good line

shot, but fully one thousand yards away from the Yankee stern. Night was coming, and the men stood about the deck in groups and discussed the chances.

We lost more than we made by the gun-practice, losing way by the luff necessary to bring the gun to bear fairly.

The chase was now sinking her courses, and was giving us the tow-rope every minute, when the boatswain's pipe was heard, and we were ordered to "Stand by to tack ship."

We had been fairly outsailed, and, in common with most of the crew, I wished the gallant Yankee captain luck forever for the splendid pluck and seamanship he had displayed.

I was not nearly so well pleased when I found myself called aft to explain why I had not obeyed orders to elevate the gun. What a fool I was not to have given her another turn the last time, as it would have done no harm. All the same, I found myself in irons and in the brig, the officer of the deck remarking "that I would be made an example of." I tried to look indifferent, but I had rather have been somewhere else.

The truth was, that our ship's sailing qual-

ities were greatly impaired. Some of her copper was no doubt started, as we churned up the water like a paddle-wheeler, and she did not come around as she did at first. But as I have said before, we might have been outsailed several times if the Yankee captain had not funked at the gun shots.

In January we were off the Malabar coast, and took two prizes — both destroyed. We now sailed southwest, and on the 9th of February came in sight of Johanna Island in the Mozambique Channel. We ran in and anchored, and many of us got liberty to go ashore.¹ The most of the men declared that they were as dry as a “limeburner’s wig,” and I have no doubt that many of them would have given a pound for a quart of liquor. But these people are all Mohammedans, and if

¹ “I gave my sailors a run on shore, but this sort of ‘liberty’ was awful hard work for Jack. There was no such thing as a glass of grog to be found in the whole town, and as for a fiddle and Sal for a partner, — all of which would have been a matter of course in *civilized* countries, — there were no such luxuries to be thought of. They found it a difficult matter to get through with the day, and were all down at the beach long before sunset, — the hour appointed for their coming off, — waiting for the approach of the welcome boat. I told Kell to let them go on shore as often as they pleased, but no one made a second application.” — Semmes’s *Memoirs of Service Afloat*, p. 735.

there was anything to drink save water on the island, they had no doubt been warned to keep it out of our way.

The people are as black as if coated with gun-varnish, and tall and muscular, and all went armed. We wandered up and down the beach, buying shells and shying them into the water the next minute. Sweetmeat sellers were the only merchants about, and they did a thriving trade with their filthy wares, until one fellow found a cockroach in his, about four inches long, when he gave the vendor's tray a kick that scattered the contents all over the sands. I bought a pistol about two feet long, with a flint lock and inlaid stock, in one of the bazars, for sixteen shillings, and for another shilling about a pint of powder that looked like badly made number four shot. A party of us went down to the beach to try it, and one fellow loaded it pretty nigh to the muzzle, and after five misses it went off, most of it to sea, as, beyond a small piece of the stock, there was nothing left. How the reckless fellow that pulled the trigger escaped I can't imagine; but the lock went through the rim of one man's cap, cutting a very ragged hole, and — confound their skylarking — I lost my purchase.

The natives were very truculent and surly, and would stand no nonsense; and one big black fellow, with a turban like a cart-wheel, flashed his pistol fair in the face of a topman that peeped under a woman's yasmak, or veil. But he got it hot before he had time to pick his flint and try it again; he was knocked down in short order, and an arsenal of blunderbusses and daggers flying out of his waistband, it looked for a moment as if it would make a serious row. The natives rapidly congregated around, some of them with long knives as broad as your hand drawn, and one fellow proceeded to load his long gun for service. But a tall old man in a red headdress, evidently in authority, came down and waved the people back with his staff. M'Gregor acted prudently and well, and got the boys to return the weapons they had taken, all but one noted bully, who swore he would keep a big knife he had captured. Old Sandy walked up to the man and gave him a blow between the eyes that laid him sprawling; then he recovered the knife and handed it to the sheik, and we all went back to the boats. Had the crew been in liquor there would have been a terrible fight, and no doubt loss of life.

The houses seem to have been "shaken through a ladder," as they are built one on top of another and in every direction, and the streets are so narrow that a donkey blocks them up entirely, and the filth is indescribable, with that peculiar, heavy, soaking smell, never noticed save in the east,—some of the bazars in Old Cairo have it in perfection.

The quarrel had been reported to our captain, and we were not allowed to go ashore, and after a few days' stay sailed away, much to our satisfaction.

We sailed through Mozambique Channel, and late in March anchored in Table Bay.

XI.

It was understood by all of us, that when we left here we would steer for England, and great was our joy in consequence. It was evident that we could expect no more prizes, and, moreover, the English officials, acting under orders, no doubt, were not by any means so cordial as they were at our former visit.

The Tuscaloosa had been seized,¹ we heard,

¹ The Tuscaloosa, after cruising about the coast of Brazil, returned to Simon's Town in the latter part of December,

and a store-keeper in Cape Town told me that if the Alabama lay here long she might suffer the same fate. It had been intended to go around to Simon's Town and give our ship an overhauling, which she certainly needed. Every time our engine went over the centre it gave the ship a shake, and I began to think that our old barky's cruise might end here, but on the 25th of March we roused up our anchor and bade farewell to Cape Town, which I hope never to see again.

Just outside of the harbor we saw a large ship standing off with her main-sail backed, coming up in the wind, and the Stars and

1863, for repairs and supplies. She was seized by Admiral Sir Baldwin Walker, under orders of the home government, on the ground that she was an uncondemned prize, and as such could not be regarded as a ship-of-war. The seizure was discussed in the House of Commons, and the Duke of Newcastle, who was Colonial Secretary, finally wrote to the Governor at Cape Town, Sir Philip Wodehouse, instructing him "to restore the Tuscaloosa to the lieutenant of the Confederate States, who lately commanded her, or if he should have left the Cape, then to retain her until she can be handed over to some person who may have authority from Captain Semmes, of the Alabama, or from the government of the Confederate States, to receive her." The order did not reach the Cape until after both Lieutenant Low and Captain Semmes had left, and at the end of the war she fell into the hands of the United States Government.

Stripes flying from her mast-head. We, as usual, set the American ensign, fired a gun, and hailed her. It was the ship Tycoon, and we sent a crew aboard of her. She took us at first for an English mail-steamer, and intended to speak us. Her captain declared that if he had known who we were he could have given us a chase that would have tried our speed, but he did n't, and that was all there was about it.

We set fire to her just before dark, and she made a huge bonfire, lighting up the seas for miles around. This was the last prize the Alabama was destined to take, and commemorated the end of her active cruise against American shipping. This made the sixty-fifth of our prizes, most of which were destroyed, with the exception of the two prizes taken in the Malacca Straits. I can't remember that we got much out of our captures. Those taken off Sumatra were going to eastern ports to load with rice, and had dollars aboard, but the rest furnished us with provisions, and, I fancy, little else. I wonder what was done with all the chronometers. One of the ward-room attendants told me that the captain's cabin was vocal with their ticking, and that

the officers could n't sleep for the noise —
Credat Judæus.

It was, in fact, the funeral pyre of Yankee commerce in these seas, for since that time the bright American ensign has gradually disappeared from the ocean.

We were now in for a long voyage, and most likely without any incident to relieve the monotony. There had always been more or less gambling on the ship, but it broke out now more virulently than ever. At night, after the order was given, "Lights out," parties would go forward, and, with a lantern shaded by a canvas screen, pass long hours in the fascinations of "chuck a luck," "all fours," "forty-fives," and "hazard." The result was that half the money on the berth deck came into the possession of two men, — a cockney and a dark, curly-haired fellow called Gypsy. The cockney was simply lucky, I think, but the other was a born card-player.

He told me that he was born on the York race-track. His mother was a gypsy, and attending the races with her tribe when he came into the world. He had been all his life following the races and an attendant in

gambling booths, but he said frankly that having made a mistake about a horse he had come to sea for his health. He was full of stories about horse jockeying and racing tricks, and although most of the men knew as much about a horse as they did of a hymn-book, his stories were much relished. He was a very good sparrer, and had several pairs of gloves, and he and I passed much of our time in knocking one another about the deck.

Science, in the shape of telegraphs and steam-engines, has knocked most of the romance out of shore life, but men that go down to the sea in ships see strange sights that are not known of by college professors. I have heard at least a dozen men tell of seeing the sea-serpent, and I had no reason to disbelieve them, and I myself have seen the great white squid off Point de Galle. It was simply a gigantic cuttle-fish at least fifty feet across, and its arms, which were raised out of the water, would have easily touched the main-yard of a ship. We were within two hundred yards of it as it sunk slowly out of sight.

Old whalers will tell you of taking pieces

of the arms of the cuttle-fish out of the sperm-whale's belly, sixteen inches in diameter, with suckers on them three inches across, and no doubt these arms would be fifty feet long. A cuttle-fish one foot in diameter would easily drown a strong man in the water, so that Victor Hugo's story of the *Pieuvre* is not only possible, but very probable.

While our men would believe in any story of the marvels of the deep, they resolutely set their faces against my explanation of the telegraph, and one man clinched the matter, by telling how, just before the *Alabama* sailed, he had tried to send a messmate's chest to London by the bloody thing, so that his comrade might get it before he sailed, but although he offered the "stoker as worked it" a pound for his trouble, he would n't do it, and the fellow said he could n't. "Now, Bo, take a sheepshank in them yarns, cause we ain't fools." So I gave it up and confined myself to such narratives as "*Sinbad the Sailor*" and "*Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*," which "was reasonable and had some sense onto 'em."

M'Gregor was a stout lad when the West Indies was infested by pirates, and he had

served with men who had been on Lafitte's Vengeance and Diablotoe's Aranza. He told his stories with dry, passionless utterance, his glass green eyes looking dull and opaque under their veiled lids.

When a boy of eighteen he had shipped on a Spanish barque that left Trinidad for Cuba. There were eight men in the forecastle, half of them Irish and the rest Spaniards. Harry McBride, who afterwards commanded the patriot schooner Pilot Fish, and who was subsequently garroted at Havana for his many crimes, was one of them. The crew knew that there was \$18,000 in the run, and they agreed to McBride's proposal that they should take the ship. In the middle watch a cry was raised of "Breakers ahead," and the captain rushed on deck, and was at once struck down with a pump-brake and thrown overboard. The mate was sick in his berth, and he and the steward were likewise disposed of, and McBride took command and altered her course so as to run in among the Islands on the Main.

There was a Spaniard and his wife aboard as passengers, and it was proposed to maroon them on some small island, but McBride said

no, "dead men tell no tales;" and "indeed," said M'Gregor, "I thought so myself." Next morning at daybreak the passenger and his wife were called on deck, and were told their fate. The lift bar was taken from the open port, and they were stood side by side. As they were in soundings, the sea was alive with sharks and barracudas, lashing the water into foam with their back fins. The man was paralyzed with fear, but the woman raised her hands in supplication, and in her liquid Spanish plead for mercy. One of the Irishmen seized her to draw her back, and McBride rushed at him knife in hand. In the scuffle the two unfortunates were struck from behind, and both went overboard, and the sharks had them.

The vessel was beached on one of the Roncador reefs, and the ruffians fitted up the longboat with sail, and made their way to St. Thomas, at that time a safe resort for pirates. Here a fight took place over the booty, and two of the Spaniards and one of the Irishmen were killed, and M'Gregor remarked it was a "varra gude thing," as there was more for the rest.

For a moment we all held our breath, wher

one of the men burst out, "Ye infernal pirate, yer enough to sink a ship. I've a mind to stave yer cursed head in." There was every prospect of a row, as the man that spoke was quite capable of doing it, but the rest interfered, and our circle sullenly broke up. I had met bad men in my time, but this cold-blooded ruffian beat all. And yet atrocities like these were common enough in those days; but the steam cruisers have changed all that, and there is no spot on earth so remote that the English gun-boats will not find out the robbers of the sea.

Most of the yarns were harmless narratives of wreck and adventure, and when I recalled the lives that many of the men had lived, and the sufferings they had undergone, I could in a measure forgive their reckless behavior on shore.

I had any amount of trouble about this time, and received more "rattlings down," not to speak of irons and the spare diet furnished those "doing time in the brig," than had befallen me during the entire cruise. One of the petty officers was much disliked. He was not a thorough sailor, and was more-over a tattler and "black-lister," and constantly reporting the men.

One day I noticed him standing in the bight of a rope, and another man and myself gave a long pull on the end, bringing Mr. Quartermaster bang on the deck with a suddenness that no doubt amazed him. He was so mad that he forgot himself and struck me. This was my opportunity, and he got a battering that no doubt did him good. Of course, I was seized and hurried aft and nearly talked to death. All my delinquencies were brought up, and for the fortieth time I was told that "I would be made an example of," and then the usual sentence, a week in the brig, and all the delicacies of the season and irons to follow.

The officer's allusion to that "piece of insolence at Cape Town" was unjust to me, as I was not the guilty party. It was as follows: Cape Town has a thriving colony of Jews who are noted for their rapacity, although I will do them justice in saying that they are not one whit worse than their Christian brothers who deal with sailors. Now the "Wagabone" blamed the Jews generally for being the means of his ruin, by charging one hundred per cent. for advances; but as he admitted that he had never paid them either principal or inter-

est, they might have charged him twice as much and done him no especial injury. But he was always playing tricks on them when on shore.

He now wrote a letter, addressed to Moses Blossom, a noted Jew trader in Cape Town, and signed Captain Semmes's name to it. It offered to sell Mosey a fine assortment of watches, sleeve-buttons, shoes, stockings, underwear, swallow-tail coats, and tall hats taken from the Yankee skippers. Mosey skipped like a lamb when he read it, and no doubt saw vast possibilities of money-making in the enterprise, and in the gladness of his heart he treated the "Wagabone" to a caulker of Hollands.

Well, he came aboard the same day, and in a husky whisper told the astonished first officer that he would look at "dem dings" and "would give goot brices." Imagine the wrath of a "first-class Southern gentleman," who thought himself just a little less than the angels, at such an offer. While he went for a gun-rammer, the poor Jew took in the situation and fled for his life. White with fear, he fell into his boat, and sang out to his Malay boatmen, "Bull ! bull !"

The letter was picked up on the quarter deck where Blossom had dropped it, but the "Wagabone" had covered his tracks, and several men (myself among them) were suspected; but it did not come out until the end of the cruise who the culprit really was.

A sailor is known rather by his walk than his conversation. When you hear a man "topping his boom," "bousing up his jib," and "splicing the main-brace," he has more likely been steering a clam-wagon on shore than going down to the sea in ships. It is his walk that convicts the "turnpiker." The roll, the carriage of the arms, and the hands half closed, as if grasping a rope, all mark the square-rigged seaman. And there is more in it than you might imagine. Look at a sailor that feels ugly and wants to let his officer know it. A clipper mate would recognize the provocation and defiance, and be down on him with his brass knuckles instant. This is called "showing side," and aggravates most officers more than "back talk."

On one occasion another man and myself were sent aft for skylarking and insubordination. We got a good "blowing up," and were dismissed with our grog stopped. My

comrade was an old sailor and cared for nothing, and I marked his gait as he walked away as a study.

The turn of his head indicated defiance to all authority; the twist of his shoulders, equality with anything, living or dead; and his elbows and arms, ability to lick anything aft, from the captain down.

I was much impressed by this, and determined to put in several fine touches, and I cut some capers that ended in my discomfiture. For I heard one officer remark to another "that I must have learned that on the treadmill." And the growling boatswain said to me, "What yer wallopin' about the deck that way for? ain't the port side good enough for ye, and be d—d to ye?" I quickly recovered my normal gait and ducked below, receiving many sarcastic encomiums on my "new step."

Our first lieutenant was very tall, and when he was giving the men a blowing up it was considered very funny to look up into the tops as if they were being hailed from there. I am sure that, had I been executive officer on the Alabama, no consideration would have made me refrain from running a cutlass through some of the men. But our superi-

ors had infinite patience and self-control, and with all our evil ways we never ceased to respect them, and amongst ourselves spoke of them with praise and commendation.

We overhauled a number of vessels, but they all proved neutrals, and the Yankee flag seemed to have left the ocean. The weather was fine, and we had nothing to do but mischief, and we got tired of that.

Spinning yarns, singing old songs and making new ones, had all lost their savor, and it was with exceeding joy that on the 10th of June we saw an English pilot-boat, and found that we would soon sight the English coast. But we were not destined to cross the Channel yet.

“We’re homeward bound, we’re homeward bound,
And soon shall stand on English ground.
But ’ere that English land we see,
We first must fight the Kearsargee.”

So ran the last song made on board; and whether the poet escaped in the fight or not I do not know, but I hope so.

We ran into Cherbourg, by the east entrance, and anchored near the mole.

Several French men-o’-war lay here, and very taut and trim they looked, but all the

same, nothing will make Frenchmen seamen ; they are too flighty and excitable. Listen to the shindy they make when doing their work, and although very dandy and neat in their rig, still they don't look like thorough-bred sea-dogs ; but their officers are very fine-looking, and wear their uniforms with an air wanting to their British neighbors.

Our officers begged us that as we were now in sight of home, we would not disgrace ourselves and the ship by making a row on shore. The efficiency of the French police, however, had more to do with our abstention from our usual pranks than any good advice from our superiors.

We heard on shore that an American man-o'-war was in the Channel awaiting us, and that in all probability we should go out and fight her. The French seemed determined to observe strict neutrality, and made very little demonstration in our favor, but nothing could exceed the transports of the many English we met here.

“ You can thrash that Yankee without any trouble ; they can't stand before British sailors. Board 'em, my boy ; that's the work they don't like,” would exclaim some Eng-

lish tourist, hirsute and vociferous. Nothing aggravated me more than this sort of thing, and I was rarely civil to their class, and most of the men thought as I did.

Newspaper men abounded, and in most cases the information they got was more remarkable than authentic, and this accounts for much of the stuff that appeared in the home papers concerning the Alabama. There were others that showed a great interest in our ship, and asked very pointed questions about our equipment and guns. They were generally grave, quiet men, with a marked accent, rather nasal than otherwise. These were Americans, and they were very persevering and shrewd in their inquiries, but we fought shy of them, and they learned very little that was not known to everybody.

I had accumulated pay amounting to £60, and this I drew and placed in the hands of a money-changer near the quay named Cibolle, taking a receipt therefor. I had no mind to risk anything but my life in the coming fight, and I sent the receipt home, keeping a few pounds for contingencies.

To my mind, the Alabama was in no condition to meet an enemy, unless under very

favorable conditions, and these conditions were not likely to come about just now. Our ship was no longer weatherly, the way we forged through the water showed that our sheathing was in bad condition, and we had not fired a broadside for a twelvemonth. Our fixed ammunition had been put up some two years, and twice I had seen our pivot gun shells fail to explode; so we were taking chances in fighting.

Early on the morning of the 14th of June the word was given that the Yankee gun-boat with the queer name was coming into the harbor. "Sure enough, there she comes," was the cry; we collected around the berth deck ports and took a good look at her, as she steamed for the west end of the harbor. She was about the size of the Alabama, but had apparently more beam, and her masts were lower than ours, and that made her look more bulky, while everything about her was ship-shape and Bristol fashion. "Well, we've had a plum-pudding voyage, and it will be a fitting termination to have a square fight with an antagonist of our size, — and we'll do our best." That was the general feeling amongst the men.

We were not making any repairs of moment, as indeed we had not the facilities, but we took in coal, and learned we were to go outside the next day.

Saturday night, the last that many of our messmates were ever to see, we sang our last song and spun our last yarn.

"We'll meet our foe with hearts as true
As ever beat in British men,
And with our native land in sight,
We'll do our best to win the fight.

"We're homeward bound, we're homeward bound, and
soon shall see
The native land we love so well,
And just below the Stars and Bars,
We'll fly the flag of the Kersargee."

"Snip's" muse was evidently getting gouty, but this was the last we should have of it, and we sung it *con amore*.

XII.

Sunday, June 19, 1864, was a beautiful day, wind blowing from the west. The quay was crowded with sight-seers who had heard that we were to meet the Yankee man-o'-war. The enthusiastic Briton, with helmet and veil, was conspicuous and ridiculous, as usual, and one big man, with a head as red as a port-

We cheered, but there was no enthusiasm. All hands were ready to fight, but I am sure that if the majority thought at all, the feeling was one of doubt; in my own mind there was no doubt. We were to meet a crack man-of-war, fully our match in size, and with all the advantage of drill, discipline, and gun practice. In two years we had not had real gun drill a dozen times, and I had seen nothing in the practice and shooting of our crew to lead me to believe for a moment that we were near the equal of a regular man-o'-war, with her skilled and practiced gunners.

We set jib, fore-course, and top-sails, spanker, and gaff, and passed out the west entrance of the harbor, the white forts gleaming in the sunshine. We went to quarters and stood to our guns, with scarcely a word spoken. It was very different from the Hatteras fight, and there was no chance of weathering this Yankee, and bringing him under our guns by a false hail.

name be tarnished by defeat? The thing is impossible! Remember that you are in the English Channel, the theatre of so much of the naval glory of our race, and that the eyes of all Europe are at this moment upon you. The flag that floats over you is that of a young republic, who bids defiance to her enemies, whenever and wherever found. Show the world that you know how to uphold it. Go to your quarters."

It had just struck four-bells when we got sight of our enemy heaving on the swell, and with her sails set. She seemed about three miles away. The French corvette left us here and stood off between us and the harbor mouth. We steamed towards the Kearsarge direct, bringing her on our starboard, and the sail-shifters got in our top-sail and course. I glanced down the guns, and our crew looked very strong and serviceable. They were all stout, muscular men, and were evidently in earnest, and were very martial in their cutlasses and belts. "Now men be steady," and, at I think a mile away, we opened fire. I was serving one of the thirty-twos, and knew their range, and for all the good we might do, might as well have fired belaying pins at the enemy.

One of the men at my gun was an old man-o'-war sailor, and he said to me, "How rank our powder smells, and the smoke is dull and thick." He was right, our powder was no doubt "caky," and the smoke floated black and foul to the leeward. We were now circling around the Kearsarge, each vessel being starboard to the other.

The Yankee was evidently in no hurry,

and her men were on the top-sail yards yet. At about one thousand yards she fired her first gun, evidently a heavy one, for the shot flew over us. We were firing as fast as we could load and pull the lanyards. There was but little swell on, and nothing to prevent accurate gun practice. We were steaming around each other, and were not more than eight hundred yards apart, when the Kearsarge gave us her whole broadside.

One shot came through our bulwarks close to my gun, taking "Jumper's" head clean off, and whirling him around like a top. He was of course dead before he touched the deck, but there was no time for looking, for my gun had the range, and I laid her with care. A shell flew overhead and scooped about half the round of the mizzen-mast out and flew over the side. The Yankee looked bulky amidships, where no doubt the chain cables that are talked so much about were stoppered.

Bang! We got a shot that made us reel, and then another that burst right among the crew of the pivot gun, and listed the piece over; practically it was done for, and those serving it were half of them killed.

A thirty-two pound shot came in at the

port next to mine, glided along the gun, striking the man at the breech in the breast, and fairly tearing him in two. Men were falling fast, and we were evidently getting worsted.

Before we were ordered away from the guns I knew the ship was making water fast, and when the order was given to set top-sails and fore-course, and wear the ship, I expected we would go down. The ship gave a sickly roll, and was visibly settling aft. The deck was in a dreadful state : across the platform of the rifle-gun lay the Scotchman, M'Gregor, his hard head smashed into a gray mass ; one man of my watch was gasping in agony with his arm and shoulder torn off, and the poor Wagabone lay still and stark at the foot of the main-mast, one hand clutching the bosom of his shirt.

The Kearsarge had stopped firing ; if she had not, we should have gone down like a stone ; but when we set sail she fired a shot over us, and the order was given with energy, "All hands here ! man the boats ! jump, men ; get the wounded in." One man died just as we picked him up, and we left him. I am happy to say that nothing could have

been better than the conduct of the crew. There was no funk, shirking, or disorder, and although many a glance was cast at the bodies of those that had been our messmates for two years, there was no time for sympathy or sentiment.

The incredibly foolish stories told in some of the English newspapers were of course lies. No gunner threatened our tall first lieutenant with death for pulling down the flag; no boatswain embraced the quartermaster, and let the "salt, salt tears run down their heroic noses." When we knew that it was all over and the boats were in the water, it was every man for himself. Nor did I see Captain Semmes with a peck of gold watches going over the side as American newspapers describe. I only saw him for an instant, and although he passed a package to the boat I have no idea what it contained, and don't want to. He had fought his ship bravely, and was no doubt right to get out of the way as quickly as he could, as he was by no means assured of fair play from the Yankees, although nothing could be more generous than the treatment they gave that part of the crew they captured. In fact, they fought their

ship magnificently, and beat us fairly; and this, honestly stated, is interesting reading enough without the harrowing pathos and shandy gaff sentiment injected into it by the British penny-a-liner.

With a crash the mizzen-mast fell, nearly catching some of the men in the doused spanker. The officers had all taken to the boats, and I rushed below to get a watch and ten pounds that I had left in my monkey-jacket, but it was gone. Some fellow must have had his wits about him.

Some of the wounded were lying on the berth deck aft, and I stopped for a moment, but it was too late. The ship gave a wallow, and the air expelled from below came rushing up the companionway. I heard a shout, and saw a man, evidently the doctor, running towards the companionway. No doubt he was calling for assistance to bring the wounded men from below; but it was too late to aid him, and he and his helpless charge went down with the vessel. The stern was almost under water and the main-mast was tottering when, making a jump, I caught a ratline of the port shrouds and got on the rail. I gave a glance around. Our own boats I could not

see, but the Kearsarge cutters were pulling for the wreck and not more than two hundred yards off, when she heeled to port, throwing me into the water. I was a good swimmer, and managed to get rid of my pistol, but could not get my belt loose. Not fifty yards away was a French pilot-boat, with her number on the main-sail. I swam towards her, and as she shot past I was thrown a line which I fortunately caught, and in a moment was on her deck. The bulwarks of the Alabama were under water, and soon she sank to the tops; and before we were a quarter of a mile away the last vestige of my vessel was under the waves of the Channel. Yes, the terror of the seas was gone, and the last privateer that the world will most likely see.

I do not believe that it was ever known how many of the crew were killed. I *know* that many of the wounded went down with the ship, and it is safe to say that at least twenty men lost the number of their mess. The official account says seven killed. Frankly, I know better, and I think I am nearer the mark in my estimate.

I knew nothing of the Deerhound until I read of her in the papers a few days after,

and I was glad to know that our commandér and so many of the men had got safe away. Five men were picked up by the French boat, and in a couple of hours we were in Cherbourg. We were at once taken in hand by our countrymen, and wellnigh talked to death.

It was exasperatingly funny to hear a snuffing cockney, who was no doubt first lieutenant in some haberdashery establishment in London, laying down nautical reasons why we were whipped. "Ye should 'ave boarded 'em, my fine fellers. They carn't stand the cold steel." Like most sailors, I did not take kindly to this sort of thing, so I told the fellow that if he did n't "belay his jaw" I would throw him in the dock. But foolish as this talk was, it was repeated by men who should have had more sense and knowledge. Board the Kearsarge! We would have had a fine time running alongside of her. There would n't have been enough of us left to have boarded a catboat.

No; the eleven-inch gun and the first-rate shooting of the Yankee crew cooked our goose, and that's all there is in it. But Ananias was in his glory. He had been saved in the boat with me, and, surrounded by a

crowd of Britons, he fairly let himself out. I stopped for a moment and heard him tell how he had gone below to save a messmate, when the ship went down and he found himself under water on the lower deck; but he held on till the poor fellow's belt parted (here he piped his eye), and he concluded to come up. Fortunately, his head struck one of the "ventilators," and through this he came to the surface (and here he referred to me). "This 'ere messmate o' mine was swimming around, and says I" — I was so astonished and put out by his bringing me in that I scuttled off, afraid of what might follow.

He evidently did not lose anything by his narrative powers, as I saw him a few hours after in one of the taverns very drunk, and surrounded by a crowd full of enthusiasm and admiration.

I fully believe that many of the highly sensational accounts that found their way across the Channel were mainly due to the yarns of this ingenious and accomplished liar. "And of such material is history made."

When I reached home in Cumberland with eight shillings in my pocket my mother hailed me as a hero, but my father received me with

deep disgust and strong language. He spoke of the Alabama as a "sneaking pirate," and hoped that I would n't take to housebreaking next.

In selling my prize-ticket for twenty-eight pounds, I closed my connection with the Confederate Steamship Alabama.



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